No. 32 April-June 1960

SOVIET SURVEY

A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends

REVISIONISM

REFORMISM

ORTHODOXY

RUSSIAN MARXISM REVISITED:

A REPORT ON CURRENT CONTROVERSIES

FIVE SHILLINGS

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The Editor

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Introduction	*Revisionism: The first sixty years*	2
Document	*A Short Guide to Heresy*	7
Christian Gneuss	*Eduard Bernstein*	14
Daniel Bell	*In Search of Marxist Humanism*	21
Giorgio Galli	*Italy: The Choice for the Left*	32
Jean Duvignaud	*France: The Neo-Marxists*	40
George Arnold	*Britain: The New Reasoners*	46
Lewis Coser	*USA: Radicals at Bay*	53
Edward Seidensticker	*Japan: Divisions in Socialism*	61
Heinz Schurer	*The Permanent Revolution*	68
Document	*The Party and the Truth*	74
Jürgen Rühle	*Ernst Bloch*	85
Samuel Baron	*George Plekhanov*	94
Robert C. North	*M. N. Roy*	102
Interview	*Comintern Reminiscences*	109
Alfred Zauberman	*Lange's New Economics*	116
Our Contributors		110

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Introduction

REVISIONISM—THE FIRST SIXTY YEARS

REVISIONISM, according to the Soviet *Political Dictionary*, is 'a trend in the working class movement that, for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, wants to debase, to emasculate, to destroy Marxism by means of a revision, i.e. by way of a re-examination, distortion, and negation of its basic tenets'. In the Soviet view the ideology of revisionism was utterly routed sixty years ago by Lenin and others. If so, it must be a matter of some surprise that sixty years after this decisive defeat the struggle against revisionism has again become one of the central themes in Soviet political literature. An entire library of anti-revisionist books has been sponsored by a leading Moscow publishing house (Sotsekgiz), and practically every issue of the 'ideological' magazines contains at least one article against what the Moscow conference of Communist bloc leaders (in November 1957) defined as the 'main danger'. Stranger still, the current polemics are by no means directed mainly against Democratic Socialism, the Communists' traditional rival in the working-class movement; it is aimed primarily at individuals, and entire sections, of the Communist movement in both East and West.

According to the traditional Marxist-Leninist explanation, revisionism appeared on the scene as the ideology of the labour aristocracy and of petty-bourgeois elements that had penetrated the labour movement in a period of relative economic prosperity. But this reasoning does not hold much water in present conditions, for it would be difficult to argue that countries such as Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary went through an era of prosperity in the middle fifties, or that the revisionist leaders there acted on behalf of a bourgeoisie that no longer existed. New explanations and new arguments were needed to combat the new deviation, for it was not sufficient merely to declare that the heretics had strayed from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy; this, by now, was common knowledge and did not cut much ice. For even the orthodox Leninists have had to re-examine Marxism in the light of the exigencies of the middle twentieth century, to make adjustments and revisions. Kautsky and Plekhanov were in an easier position when they criticised Bernstein around 1900; the socialist parties were still everywhere in opposition, the general political situation had not basically changed since Marx's and Engels' deaths. To most, if not all questions of the day, there was an answer in the scriptures. But Communism in power in 1955 was in a very different position; it was not easy to find in Marx's writings support and encouragement for the establishment of a totalitarian state, for the recurrent purges that wiped out, inter alia, most Communist leaders. This was explained (until Stalin's death) as the creative continuation and development of Marxism. After the 20th CPSU congress it was partly disparaged as a distortion ('dogmatism') of Marxism-Leninism. But, in contrast to revisionism, it was regarded as a venial sin, for it was believed to have a transient character which did not affect the basic tenets of the creed. There were the sputniks and the great progress in industrial output, and what did temporary violations of inner-party democracy matter in comparison with these achievements?

HOW gingerly dogmatism is treated can be seen in a new book on revisionism, A. Butenko's *Osnovnie cherty sovremennovo Revizionizma* (Moscow 1959). Having provided dozens of illustrations of revisionist deviations, the author apparently felt obliged to provide at least one example of dogmatist extremism to restore at least a superficial balance. But to find that illustration he has to look for a quotation from the Polish *Trybuna Ludu* in 1956—in the great expanses of the Soviet Union under Stalin he was apparently unable to discover what he needed.

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The growing preoccupation with revisionism has revived interest in the historical revisionism debate. Unfortunately, these new studies contain little that is new, and the general approach is certainly not less subjective (to put it mildly) than it was ten or twenty five years ago. The following paragraph from a recent book on the subject published by Leningrad University may stand as a perfect illustration:

'During the last years of his life Engels felt a greater and greater distrust of Bernstein and Kautsky. His letters in the nineties contained an ever sharper condemnation of the opportunistic tendencies in their views and actions. Engels criticised Kautsky more than once for his isolation from the masses. In a letter to Adler on 11 January, 1894 he pointed to the fact that Kautsky had lost contact with the real party movement. In this context one begins to understand why Engels did not appoint Kautsky executor of his, and Marx's, literary legacy.' (B. A. Chagin, *Borba Marksizma-Leninizma protiv Filosovskovo Revizionizma v Kontse 19ovo—*nachale *20ovo vekov*. Leningrad, 1959, p. 34.) Such historiography makes considerable demands on the ignorance of the reader; for even a glance at the exchange of letters between Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein, Bebel and Victor Adler shows that exactly the opposite is true.[1] The Soviet historian, for obvious reasons, has to prove that Kautsky had all along been a revisionist, a secret supporter of Bernstein. The left wing in German Social-Democracy fare somewhat better, but they too are not without blame: Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg are criticised for belittling the impact of revisionism, for failing to understand its social sources and significance, for regarding it merely as a 'literary trend'. Karl Liebknecht is upbraided for agnostic mistakes and 'general weakness in the field of philosophy'. 'Only the leader of Bolshevism, Lenin, put with all clarity the question about the class roots of revisionism and gave an unsurpassed characterisation of it as a bourgeois social reformism' (p. 71). This refusal to understand what the revisionism debate was really about—why revisionism prevailed in the West while orthodox Marxism won through in the East, makes the study of this literature an unrewarding employment, and it is of academic interest only to speculate whether a more detached view of these events would have prevailed in the Soviet Union if the Soviet ideologists had not now to engage in another battle against neo-revisionism.

In the current struggle against revisionism, the deviationists are found guilty on the following main counts (as well as on many minor ones):

1. They deny the Marxist theory of the pauperisation of the proletariat.
2. They think that contemporary capitalism can develop without crises that become progressively more violent and eventually fatal.
3. They attribute undue importance to bourgeois ('formal') democracy.
4. They regard Stalinism as a specific political-economic system rather than a minor transient aberration.
5. They criticise the principle of *partiinost* in Marxist-Leninist theory and Leninist philosophy in general.
6. They believe that a gradual transition into socialism is possible by means of reform rather than revolution.
7. Most of them are willing to make concessions in regard to the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
8. They deny or belittle the economic role of the socialist state.
9. They disagree with the Soviet concept of proletarian internationalism and in its place advance the demand for a national communism or, at any rate, a larger degree of independence for Communists states and parties.

THERE are two basic differences between the way orthodox Marxists conducted their polemics against revisionism sixty years ago, and the current onslaught on neo-revisionism. Kautsky, Plekhanov, and the others did not waste time dealing with second or third

[1] It is true that Engels, for personal reasons, excluded Kautsky as a literary executor. But he did appoint Bernstein. According to the reasoning of the Soviet author it must appear that Engels was a 'reformist', for he preferred Bernstein, the future revisionist, to Kautsky, the guardian of Marxist orthodoxy. Which tends to show that the falsification of history has its risks.

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rate ideological opponents; they preferred to tackle Bernstein, who had provided the most consistent critique of orthodox Marxism. The current anti-revisionist literature is of a very different character: it is invariably directed against Polish litterateurs or Yugoslav writers of whom nobody has ever heard, against Hervé and Gates, Giolitti and Salzberg. Whatever their merits or demerits, these men have not made any major theoretical contribution to Marxism and its critique. But the revisionists who really matter are invariably passed over in silence: the theories of Lukacs or Ernst Bloch, Henri Lefebvre or Karl Korsch are hardly ever considered in this context, and their work is never discussed.[2] It is probably true that there are no Soviet ideologists qualified to tackle the more sophisticated Western revisionists, and that they prefer therefore to pursue the line of least resistance. It is nevertheless a matter of some surprise that not even one serious attempt has been made in this direction.

The other basic difference between the debate of 1900 and the current polemics lies in the very approach of orthodoxy then and now. Kautsky, Plekhanov, and the others seriously examined Bernstein's contentions in the economic, social, political, and philosophical field, pointed to the weaknesses in his philosophical views, the mistakes in his statistics, the inconsistencies in some of his political proposals. It was, for a considerable time at least, a free discussion, and the front between revisionism and orthodoxy was neither clear nor unchanging during the two decades after the debate had started—there were many changes of view in both camps. But then German Social-Democracy could afford such freedom in a debate about the development of capitalist society while it was itself in opposition to that society and its institutions. Soviet Communism cannot afford a real debate, for too many vested interests are involved: the neo-revisionists of the fifties have emerged out of the Communist camp, their critique has less to do with the development of capitalism since Marx—though that theme too is discussed—than with the development of *communist* society during the last forty years. But on that subject there can be no discussion. The decisive criterion in judging the revisionists' views has to be: does it harm the cause of the Soviet Union, its leaders, its doctrines, institutions, and the regime as a whole? The main criterion was not, and could not be, the question whether part or all of the critique of the revisionists was correct.

THIS does not mean that the Soviet leaders and their successors will not themselves revise their own theories and policies. The Chinese with their Fourierist Phalansteries have begun to reveal non-Marxist tendencies at a comparatively early stage of development. This official revisionism, however, has nothing to do with alienation and the young Marx; it is solely concerned with the exigencies of a society that has emerged since Marx and Lenin, and with circumstances that could not be foreseen by either of them.

There is no reason to assume that the critique of revisionism is of great concern to the Soviet leaders; but, curiously enough, some of its theoretically least important aspects may cause trouble. What we have in mind is, in particular, the debate on the interpretation of the term 'peaceful co-existence'.[3] Imre Nagy was severely attacked by Soviet authors for disagreeing with the two-camps thesis, and for arguing that in the present-day world there was room for other politico-economic systems (Butenko, *op. cit.* p. 124). In particular, he was attacked for suggesting that India and the United Arab Republic and other former colonies were investing great efforts in the transformation of their countries into societies of a socialist character. This, according to the anti-revisionists, is all nonsense: without the dictatorship of the proletariat there could be no movement towards socialism in these countries.

[2] Lukacs is occasionally attacked in connection with his *literary* work, but as a philosopher is passed over in silence. The East Germans did publish a book in which they attempted to refute Ernst Bloch's philosophical views, a step which they could not avoid because of his wide influence. But the 'discussion' was strictly limited to East Berlin and environs.

[3] See for instance E. A. Korovin, *Osnovnie Problemy sovremennykh mezhduharodnykh otnoshenii* (Moscow, 1959).

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though state capitalism could for a time fulfil a progressive function. 'It is not necessary to prove in detail that such an interpretation of peaceful co-existence, such an appraisal of the development of the non-socialist countries of the zone of peace, is thoroughly incompatible with the theory of Marxism-Leninism. Such an interpretation will serve as justification for the reformist theory of transition towards socialism without revolution; it leads to the disorientation of the toilers of the non-socialist countries, it inculcates in the masses the opportunist idea of unreserved support for the policy of the national bourgeoisie which rules in these countries, and which was, as it were, preparing itself for self liquidation' (Butenko, p. 26). This is all very well, and may be perfectly legitimate in the polemics against (European) revisionists. But Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser, and the other 'representatives of the national bourgeoisie' in Asia and Africa are bound to hear about it. And they may not like it.

REVISIONISM emerged inside the Soviet bloc in the short period between the 'thaw' and the 'freeze', and in 1956/57 it found public expression. By the time the counter-offensive had been fully developed in print, it had already ceased to be politically dangerous. It disappeared from the surface when the intellectual ferment which paved the way to the 1956 upheaval ended with the Hungarian defeat and Polish reconsolidation. In contrast, it was only later that it stimulated revisionist thought among those Western Marxists who were stirred by the events in Poland and Hungary. It was between Khrushchev's 'secret' speech and these events that the revisionists inside the bloc became active; it was between these events and Khrushchev's ascendancy that the Western revisionists began their theoretical heart-searching. What happened at that time to the Eastern revisionists and what are the prospects of revisionism, if any, in the Soviet bloc?

The political reactions among the revisionists to the anti-revisionist reconsolidation varied. Some adapted themselves to the situation as best they could and began to develop theories of reconciliation, rather like some Russian Marxists after 1905. They lost all hope in the possibilities of political action 'from below'. Some retained a residual belief in the possibility of activities from inside the Party; some just turned to individual pursuits. Both those who remained in the Party and those who left it expressed their feeling of helplessness. As one of them remarked in conversation: 'How ridiculously naive is Mannheim's analysis of the intelligentsia. The intelligentsia cannot achieve anything in the present structure.'

Still others pinned their belief on the possibilities of long-term changes; but they have gone through both the revisionist and post-revisionist disillusion and have quietly given up their Marxism, even if they retain some elements of it in their thinking. What they still cling to is the humanist mainspring of their revisionist attitude. Having once rejected the official mythology, they refuse to believe that it can be maintained for long by administrative means. Like Djilas, they mostly came to a more or less social-democratic position.

Other revisionists preserve their neo-Marxist beliefs but hope for some new margin of manoeuvre. One of them, much concerned with the problem of the relation between freedom and the distribution of power, remarked in conversation: 'What a pity that the Indian Communists are not in power! We would be in a much better position to manoeuvre inside the bloc'. Thus, faced with a deadlock in which their internal 'pluralist' hopes were firmly dealt with by the Party bureaucracy, some revisionists entertain the cheerful idea of gaining some freedom at the expense of others.

If this sounds strange, one has to remember the background. After the upheaval it was only the Polish revisionists who could continue their debates, though only in private. In public they were practically reduced to silence and found themselves in a rather curious position: they were looked down upon both by their elders and by the generation now coming on to the scene. The old *apparatchiki* hated them, the intellectual careerists and administrative officials were amused by their naiveté, the technical intelligentsia was largely indifferent, and the Catholics had no sympathy with them. On

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the other hand the younger generation, by now completely immunized against any ideological bacilli, adopted the motto, 'Death to the suckers', and looked upon them with a mixture of irony and condescension, for had they not let themselves be taken in, and were they not still prisoners of an ideological approach?

IN the Soviet Union itself the revisionist fever of 1956/57 was less pronounced, the Soviet youth less articulate; there were no Kolakowskis among them. But attitudes conducive to revisionism were frequently displayed in the Soviet Union at the time and despite reconsolidation such attitudes still persist. Even in 1960, Moscow youth flocks to the poetry readings by Evtushenko, and makes him its idol, just as, once upon a time, the Polish youth adored Hlasko (now in exile).

The erstwhile slogan of the Polish students—'Thinking has a colossal future'—is forgotten, but it seems unlikely that all independent thought can be eradicated. Those who tasted it will not abandon it; administrative pressure can prevent its public expression, but it cannot be as successful as the terror in stopping it. The memory of Hungary will pale not only for the Western public, but also for those to whom it was intended as a lesson. Even under Kadar, books like Gyula Hernadi's *On the Steps of Friday* bear testimony to this. In Poland the new, post-existentialist generation includes young writers, like Stanuch, who are no less remote from socialist realism than their predecessors. And in the Soviet Union, Evtushenko introduced as a *leitmotif* of his latest poem (publicly read) a stanza about a man who 'liked Picasso, but did not like Gerasimov'.

The picture would be incomplete without mentioning one other aspect of the problem. Revisionist thinking—and all independent thinking under a ruling orthodoxy is revisionist—is also finding its way into the *inner sanctum* of the guardians of the faith. Polish revisionist economics is a case in point. It has penetrated the Soviet citadel, via the Lange-Nemchinov axis, at the same time as Polish revisionist economists are facing a renewed counter-offensive of the diehards. In general, while revisionism from below is condemned, from above it is legitimised only when the heterodoxy of independent thinking is transubstantiated into the reformist orthodoxy of the Party bureaucracy.

It is of course tempting to draw parallels between the fate of the old revisionism which shook European social-democracy at the time of the Bernstein controversy, and the possible destiny of the revisionism affecting the Communist parties since Stalin's death.

The old revisionism was defeated in the inter-party struggle by the orthodox Marxists, but their victory was short-lived. The keeper of orthodoxy, Kautsky, was eventually himself called a renegade of the proletarian revolution by Lenin. The revolutionary myth, accepted by European social-democracy in the post-1848 era, could not withstand the reality of reformist society. Social-democracy clung for a while to its revolutionary shibboleths, but abandoned them in practice, and later also in theory.

Can the process of *embourgeoisment* have a similar effect on Soviet Communism?

Historical parallels can be misleading. Social-democracy became reformist because it operated in conditions where reforms were possible through political democracy. The one-party system in the countries of the Soviet bloc provides a different background, and there is an equally marked difference in the internal structure of social-democratic and communist parties. The former, as one party among others, have abandoned their original revolutionary mythology; the abandonment of their myths by the latter must undermine the legitimacy of their rule and their title to the monopoly of power.

That does not rule out revisions and reforms from above, but it rules out their legitimate initiation outside the Party leadership. The prospects of revisionism are necessarily connected with the problem of the diffusion of power.

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A SHORT GUIDE TO HERESY

With two exceptions, these items have been taken from Reformism, Revisionism, and Problems of Contemporary Capitalism, *published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences at the end of* 1959. *The item on Poland is extracted from I. F. Shitov's* Proletarski Internatsionalizm i Sovremenny Revizionizm (*Moscow*, 1959), *and the one on Sweden from* Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya, *February*, 1960.

AMERICA, LATIN

In the ideological activities of the communist parties of Latin America in recent years an important part was the struggle against the revisionist elements and groups. In the Latin American countries, as in a number of other countries, elements alien to the party and to Marxism, but which have managed so far to conceal their true face, and also ideologically unstable people, have exploited the struggle of the communist parties to liquidate the consequences of the cult of the individual and to remedy errors of a sectarian nature, to make onslaughts on the general party line and on the fundamental principles of Marxism, and have made attempts to undermine and even liquidate the parties themselves.

Revisionists in Brazil, using their position in party press organs, began a discussion in the papers *Impresa Popular* and *Voz Operaria*, for the purpose of revising the ideological foundations of the party's policy. On being expelled from the party, the revisionists availed themselves of the services of the bourgeois press and then, rallying into a sort of 'renovation' movement, they began, in September 1957, to publish the journal *Novos Tempos*, in which they waged an open fight against Brazil's Communist Party.

Attacks of an 'economist', liquidating nature took place in Mexico. Revisionist diatribes increased particularly against the Communist Party in view of the position it held in the period of the preparation and holding of the Presidential Elections in July 1958.

AUSTRIA

The ideology of the Austrian right-wing social democrats (Austro-Marxism) always played an important part in the general field of opportunist theories put forward by reformists in the struggle against Marxism. As we know, the Austro-Marxist school was through-and-through reformist and waged a fierce fight against the fundamental revolutionary precepts of Marxism. However, the contemporary ideology of the Austrian socialists is characterised by a new step to the right and is distinguished from the classic Austro-Marxism of the early 20th century by an open break with Marxism. While the ideologists of Austro-Marxism—O. Bauer, F. Adler and others—tried to criticise the ideas of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, without making a formal break with Marxism, the present leaders of the Socialist Party of Austria have openly broken with Marxism and gone over to positions of bourgeois ideology. This found expression in the numerous books and articles by the leaders of the SPA, published after the war, and, finally, in the programme put forward at the Salzburg Congress in November 1957 . . .

Why, then, is the Socialist Party of Austria still exercising influence on the labour movement and why has it still the support of a considerable section of Austria's workers? This is due to a number of factors.

First: in the postwar period the workers of Austria, in the course of a fierce class struggle, had gained some important positions—particularly in the field of social insurance. These successes were predetermined by the situation, so favourable to the working class, which arose in Austria following the rout of fascism and the liberation of Austria by the Soviet Army. The leaders of the Socialist Party, always having tried to brake the mass struggle of the workers, ascribe these successes of the working class movement to their policy. And part of the workers still believe this . . .

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Contemporary reformist theories in Austria are directed at masking the true face of the right-wing leaders of the Socialist Party, and at justifying, somehow, in the eyes of the workers, their role of lackey to the monopolies. But no theoretical writhings can conceal from the Austrian proletariat the treacherous role of the right-wing leadership of the Socialist Party in the labour movement, or justify the right-wing socialist leaders who have linked their fate with monopolist capital.

CAPITALISM, NATURE OF

Some social achievements of the working class in a number of capitalist countries were fostered by the radical change in the inter-relation between the forces of capitalism and the forces of socialism throughout the world in favour of socialism. The capitalists' fear of a social revolution compels them to make some concessions to the workers . . . Contrary to revisionist imaginings, the nature of capitalism has not changed. New phenomena in capitalism, developing in particular in connection with the growth of the state-monolithic capitalism, did not and could not lead to any radical changes in the position of the working class. The main objective of capitalists has always been, and still is, the extraction of additional, surplus value. Capitalist production relations are still distinguished by their exploitation of hired labour.

COLE, G. D. H.

Thus Cole expounded the gist of the 'industrial partnership' system which, in his view, would resolve all social contradictions in contemporary Britain. It is easy to see that Cole's system is no less utopian than other Fabian programmes for the transformation of the social structure in English society. Given the preservation of private property in the means of production, it is the capitalists who will remain the masters of the situation; they will reserve the right of dismissing workers, and the formal recognition of the status of the partners will not change anything . . .

In reality, however, it transpired that Labour, while in power, had deceived the expectations of the British people who had placed certain hopes in them—and the Conservatives were once again returned to power. Many members of the Labour Party demand of the leadership a return to socialist ideals, a struggle for the unity of action of the working class; and they support the proposals of the British Communist Party for joint action on important economic and political issues. And Fabian Cole goes on telling the workers that in existing conditions there are now no grounds for class antagonism in Britain, and that all social differences can be resolved; all that needs to be done is for the workers to have their status as partners recognised. In effect this means seeking new forms of co-operation between labour and capital, which would enable the capitalists calmly and quietly to exploit their partners—the workers.

ENGLAND

In their pamphlet *Cards on the Table*, which a group of Labour journalists issued for the Margate Conference in 1947, they proclaimed that 'universal fear had become the main factor in world politics since 1945'. They dared not accuse the Soviet Union of any usurping intentions: 'It is not necessary to think that Russian policy is determined by economic or imperialist motives'. This notorious fear is, in their view, a sufficient enough factor to cause a new world war. And finally, in the *Fabian International Essays* published in 1957, that same 'fear' figures once more, but this time in the distorted form of a 'threat from outside', which 'dictatorial regimes' apparently cannot do without.

This fear thesis is the personal proof supplied by reactionary bourgeois and right-wing Labour politicians and theoreticians of their own poverty of thought. They substitute for a serious economic and political analysis of international relations the silly and pointless game of 'psychoanalysis', and counter Marxist science with a charlatan 'Social Freud-ism'.

The absence of a scientific, class analysis, economic and political, of international relations is a typical trait of the right-wing socialist writings which usually reiterate the falsehoods of bourgeois political science. In particular, English right-wing Labourites firmly deny the very possibility of a socialist foreign policy and maintain that the foreign policy of a power,

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irrespective of whether it is capitalist or socialist, is invariably based on strength, on seeking 'spheres of influence', on geographical, geo-political, psychological, and similar factors.

FRANCE

Although the leaders of the French Socialist Party call the trade unions of the Force Ouvrière 'free', 'independent', and 'not associated with politics', they do in point of fact carry out, through and inside them, an anti-working class policy that favours the capitalists and the Government. A number of Force Ouvrière leaders, contrary to public opinion, which condemns the colonial war of the French imperialists in Algeria, defend the policy of 'pacifying' the Algerians with Government troops and spread base insinuations about the Algerian fighters battling for their country's freedom . . . As they justify the war in Algeria, so the leaders of the Force Ouvrière justified the Anglo-Franco-Israeli aggression in Egypt under cover of fighting the 'slave-trading regime' and 'Soviet penetration'. At the same time the leaders of the Force Ouvrière organised the adoption of several provocative resolutions, letters and appeals against the countries of the socialist camp. Among these were greetings to the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries. Many of the 'documents' contained appeals for the 'liberation' of the People's Democracies and a description of the blessings to be conferred on the French workers by a 'common market' and a 'united Europe'.

GERMANY, WESTERN

An analysis of the new draft programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany shows that neither in its critical nor in its positive part does it appear to be what it is made out to be. Envisaging the preservation of the capitalist mode of production, of private property in the means of production, of hired labour and antagonistic classes, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany breaks with everything that constitutes the essence of socialism. In keeping with this is the definition of socialism, as given in the draft programme: it is defined not as something objectively inevitable, following from the historic doom of the capitalist method of production, not as the result of the proletariat's class struggle, but as a combination of abstract moral-ethical values, interpreted—into the bargain—in a liberal bourgeois and petty-bourgeois spirit.

The reformist ideas of the draft programme represent a theoretical expression of the opportunist interests of the privileged top layer of the working class—the labour aristocracy and the party and trade union bureaucracy, of their desire to conciliate capitalism and to co-operate with the bourgeoisie. These ideas run completely counter to the objective interests of the overwhelming majority of the working class, and, therefore, the majority of the working population.

'Proving' theories that contradict the course of historical development and the interests of a class which is the bearer of social progress in our epoch, is of course possible only from positions of idealism. And these are the positions adopted by the authors of the draft programme. They reject historical materialism, dismissing it as fatalism. On the basis of idealism the social-democratic ideology joins forces with bourgeois ideology, absorbing its different elements—from pseudo-liberal to reactionary-clerical . . .

German social-democratic theoreticians dare not refute Marxism altogether, as is being done, for example, by many British Labour ideologists. But in reality the authors of the party's draft programme will use the names of Marx and Engels, whom they invoke as the founders of the contemporary labour movement, only in order to cover up, with the names of the great proletarian revolutionaries, the honeyed chatter about 'love of truth', and 'freedom', and to detach Marx's and Engels' ideas on freedom and justice from their teachings on classes and class struggle.

INDIA

Thus, in words, the party of the Indian National Congress and the Burmese Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League have proclaimed as their objective the construction of socailism. In deed, however, developments in India and Burma can in no way be identified with socialism. State capitalism in these countries plays a progressive

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part in their struggle for independence, but it cannot alter the actual nature of capitalism because in those countries economic and political power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. In itself, the creation of state property, with the domination of private property in the means of production, does not liquidate the existence of capitalist exploitation—the basis of capitalism as a social-economic system. If capitalist property in the means of production predominates in the country, society there is developing according to laws peculiar to the capitalist production system. Without the liquidation of private property in the means of production there can be no real socialism.

The assertion that state capitalism creates elements of socialist economy inside a capitalist society is designed to dispose of the question of the socialist revolution; it is an attempt to bring everything down to reforms, to a 'transformation' of capitalism into socialism, the denial of revolution and class struggle.

The Indian National Congress party, under cover of defending the 'Indian model of a socialist society', is actually opposed to real socialism, which envisages the liquidation of capitalist property in the means of production, and the liquidation of exploitation.

INDONESIA

Asia's socialist parties, in common with the right-wing socialists of Western Europe, refute scientific socialism in their programmes and in practice. The leader of the Indonesian Socialist Party, Sharir, advocates an economy based on an 'equilibrium' between 'socialism' and 'private capital'. Sharir's Socialism is a petty-bourgeois reformism which aims at reconciling, into one whole, what is irreconcilable: private property in the means of production and a 'just', i.e. equal, distribution of the products of labour.

ITALY, COMMUNISM IN

The ideological instability of individual communists and whole groups of socialists has its roots in the past. It is known that the Italian Communist Party is one of the most influential, stable, and experienced communist parties of the world. Thanks to its years of heroic struggle against fascism, for the workers' interests, socialist concepts have today acquired great popularity in Italy. The number of Communist party members and members of Communist youth leagues rose from 20,000 in 1926 to 2 million at the present time. This numerical growth testifies to the enormous confidence of the Italian workers in their Communist Party. Among the new members who joined the Italian Communist Party in the Resistance and after the war, were many from among the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia who were unable to cast off the influence of bourgeois ideology. And it was they who succumbed to the revisionist ideas in the period of the bourgeoisie's ideological offensive. . . .

Among the communist renegades propagating revisionist views are: Antonio Giolitti, in whose pamphlet *Reforms and Revolution* the concepts of a 'new' revisionism are expounded most consistently (as far as this is possible for a revisionist); he also expounds his ideas in the journal *Passato e Presente;* Fabrizio Onofri, who formulated his revisionist views in the book *The Working Class and the Party*—which displays particularly clearly the terrible chaos and eclecticism that reign in the opinions of revisionists; Eugenio Reale, who publishes a dirty little paper, *Corrispondenza Socialista.*

ITALY, SOCIALISM IN

Ideas close to those of the revisionists are spread by those non-party intellectuals from among the bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists and even Marxists, and who even actually adopt some precepts of Marxism. The coming over of many of the bourgeois intelligentsia to socialism was promoted, first, by the colossal growth in the popularity of socialist ideas in Italy, and secondly, by the enormous influence exercised on all groups of the Italian intelligentsia by the prominent theoretician of scientific socialism in Italy and organiser of the Italian Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci . . . No doubt the fact that many of the bourgeois intelligentsia came under the influence of socialist ideas is a highly positive one, for it reflects the fundamental feature of this epoch—the transformation of socialism

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into a world system, the embracing of the whole world by socialist ideas. But some of them joined socialism in the hope of finding a mass support for their political activities, while having no intention of defending Marxism. Such men, objectively speaking, speculate with their 'socialist' views, and in reality use them for propaganda of frankly reformist or even bourgeois-liberal ideas. This is borne out by the fact that such men often try to rely, in their propaganda of bourgeois ideology, on Gramsci, distorting his ideas, and quoting them out of context. They are usually to be found with so-called independent journals—*Nuovi argomenti, Ponte, Mulino, Criterio, Nord e Sud, Opinione, Razionamenti, Tempi moderni, Tempo presente*, and so on. Many of them were members of the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties in the past, and some joined the Italian Socialist party recently, such as for example the participants of the bourgeois-democratic movement called National Unity. It is significant that former members of that movement joined the right wing of the Italian Socialist party and are now fighting against Marxism with particular ferocity. Thus the revisionists in the Socialist party, in their ideological onslaught on Marxism, have joined ranks with the bourgeois politicians.

PAUPERISATION

Contrary to revisionist and reformist assertions, the absolute impoverishment of the proletariat in the capitalist world will not cease so long as capitalism goes on; it shows itself in the most different forms. This impoverishment strikes one particularly in the study of the gap—which in the last few decades has been steadily growing—between the value of labour-power and the level of real wages. The lagging of wages behind the real value of labour-power is one of the most important, though not the only, evidence of poverty.

POLAND

In autumn 1956, M. Bibrowski, E. Werfel, and other publicists wrote in the Polish press against the leading role of the Soviet Union in the socialist camp, against the leading role of the CPSU in the world communist movement. The revisionists in Poland then came out openly against the international links of the toilers, against Soviet-Polish friendship, and they called for a 'reconsideration' of Marxism-Leninism. The resolution of the IX Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party on the situation in and the main tasks of the Party, adopted in May 1957, said the following: 'The sharp and necessary criticism of dogmatism and of the errors of the past caused among politically weak and unstable comrades a tendency towards the other extreme—a tendency to adopt revisionist positions and to dispute the scientific basis of our ideology'. The Plenum condemned revisionism as the main ideological danger in the Party, and appealed to all members of the Party to struggle with all their strength against revisionism, against chauvinistic moods, against all symptoms of retreat from Marxist-Leninist ideology and from proletarian internationalism.

The X Plenum of the CC of the PUWP in its resolution on the re-registration of the Party membership in October 1957, declared that 'alongside resolute partisans of the ideals of socialism and internationalism' there existed 'in many Party organisations not a few people who are there quite accidentally and, what is worse, whose opinions are irreconcilable with the communist ideology', and this prevented the Party from fulfilling its leading role among the masses, and weakened its unity. In order to secure ideological and political unity and unity of action, the Plenum considered it necessary 'to expel from the Party people who propagate anti-socialist and revisionist views, the nationalists and chauvinists, as well as those who, stubbornly retaining their dogmatic and erroneous opinions, act against the correct political line of the Party'.

In accordance with this resolution the Polish United Workers Party is purging its ranks of hostile elements. It has declared that 'membership of the Party is incompatible with revisionist activity'. A great role in the struggle against the revisionists is played by the Polish Party press.

It was quite another matter in the autumn of 1956, when from the pages of *Nowa Kultura, Zycie Warszawy*, and other Polish papers and

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periodicals revisionist sermons were flowing abundantly. M. Bibrowski, E. Werfel, and other publicists were then trying through their articles to sow doubts among Polish communists about the legitimacy of the role played by the USSR in the confraternity of the socialist countries. 'Does this role belong to it by seniority, or perhaps by its power?' M. Bibrowski asked ironically.

SOCIALISM, DEMOCRATIC

Thus, 'democratic socialists' strive to preserve contemporary capitalism in the form in which it exists in the countries of Western Europe and the United States—with anonymous shareholding companies, state capitalism, competition, and so on. And although 'democratic socialists' speak of a 'de-proletarisation of labour' and 'dissolution of classes', the existence of capitalist property presupposes the inevitable existence of classes and the class struggle. And the fact that this is determined by property relations was well known, even before Marx and Engels, to such bourgeois French historians as Guizot, Thierry, and Mignet . . .

What concrete promises does 'democratic socialism' hold for the workers, and in particular, for the industrial working class? This is what it means to them: 'A socialist regime which contains a sphere of activity and independent organisations (trade unions), affords the workers a chance of freely choosing their profession, their way of life . . . ensures sufficient social mobility and allows everyone to exercise his initiative and to take risks if so inclined'.

We know that ever since capitalism has existed, there has been a 'taste for risk' and 'sufficient mobility', but never yet has this secured for the worker and his family their daily bread. There never has been, and never can be, a democratic socialism, with the preservation of capitalist relations, that could free the worker from excessive toil, unemployment, and impoverishment.

The social ideal of 'democratic socialists' is the model of the contemporary imperialist state known as the 'Western type of socialism'. This is socialism for the financial oligarchy; but for the workers and particularly for the industrial working class this is the contemporary capitalist super-exploiting regime in which the ruling oligarchic top-layer and its State wrings all vitality out of them, a regime which harbours the threat of new hardships and new wars for all mankind.

And it is with this pitiful, reactionary utopia of bourgeois theories that present-day socialists try to replace the great teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin, teachings which have become the banner of the victorious construction of a new society in the USSR, People's China, and the People's Democracies in Europe and Asia, and is also the banner of the struggle of those workers who are still held in the shackles of exploitation in capitalist countries.

STRACHEY, JOHN

However much Strachey tries to prove his desire to single out the progressive aspects of Keynes' teachings and to take from them what benefits the cause of socialism, Strachey's whole conception remains an apologia for capitalism. Presenting the militant reactionary Keynes as a progressive reformer of capitalism, Strachey in fact confirms once again that bourgeois and right-wing socialist reformism have a common ideological and theoretical basis.

SWEDEN

How to explain that Swedish Social-Democracy still enjoys influence among the broad masses? The main reason is that, owing to the singularly favourable position of Sweden within the capitalist world, the monopolist bourgeoisie still has the economic capacity to bribe the labour aristocracy on a fairly broad scale . . . Reality shows that Sweden is a country of sharp social contrasts and deep social inequalities.

YUGOSLAVIA

The programme of the League of Yugoslav Communists introduces theoretical confusion and gross revisionist distortions into the treatment of the latest changes in world economy and into the assessment of the current phase of the general crisis of capitalism. The LYC programme detects an advance towards socialism where there is none and ignores the

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enormous victories of world socialism where one cannot fail to see them.

The struggle of two systems—the capitalist and socialist—the decisive contradiction which today represents the motive force of contemporary history, is on the whole being by-passed by Yugoslav theoreticians, who for an analysis substitute some quite unscientific arguments on the existence of two military-political groups.

The Yugoslav revisionists, as was pointed out in Khrushchev's address to the 21st Congress of the CPSU, 'strive to cover up the essence of their divergences from the Marxist-Leninists. And the essence is that Yugoslav revisionists deny the need of international class solidarity and deviate from the working class position. They try to assure all and sundry that two blocs, two military camps, exist in the world'.

Yugoslav revisionists believe that one of the main reasons behind the creation of NATO was the errors in foreign policy allegedly perpetrated by the Soviet Union . . . It is a curious thing that the interpretation of the question by the Yugoslav theoreticians tallies absolutely with what was said on this subject by the English journal, *The New Reasoner*, which is a platform for revisionists. It made an attempt to prove that the absence in socialist states of any economic foundation for the waging of an aggressive policy does not in fact preclude the possibility of their carrying out an aggressive policy. It is not difficult to see that in this case an obvious attempt is being made to whitewash American imperialism and to slander the peaceloving policy of the Soviet Union.

The campaign against Revisionism—A short reading list.

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7. Shitov, N. F., *Proletarski internatsionalizm i sovremenny revizionizm* (Moscow, 1959).
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9. Chikvadze, V. & Zivs, S., *Protiv sovremennovo reformizma i revizionizma v voprose o gosudarstve* (Moscow, 1959).
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14. Zinchenko, G. I., *Material k lektsii na temu 'O sushchnosti sovremennovo revizionizma v politicheskoi ekonomii'* (Moscow, 1958).
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EDUARD BERNSTEIN

How it all began

Christian Gneuss

IN the discussions on the theory and practice of democratic socialism which have taken place within German social-democracy, particularly after the electoral defeats of 1953 and 1957, and which are still going on, the proposal was made time and again than its traditional ideology, more precisely Marxism, should be dropped. The vigour with which this demand was put forward, from the most varied quarters, might easily suggest that until the middle of the twentieth century the SPD (Social-Democratic Party of Germany) was a Marxist party, that up to the present its theory and practice had been determined by Marxist ideas. Well-meaning critics will concede that the SPD has changed in comparison with the line it followed in Imperial Germany and in the Weimar Republic, but scarcely anyone has made a serious attempt to examine without prejudice the ideological and political past of democratic socialism in Germany. If he had, he would have soon come to the surprising conclusion that much of the debate now proceeding around Marx and Marxism is no more than a repetition of the disputes which shook the SPD more than half a century ago.

Even before 1914 the ideology of German social-democracy was anything but a monolithic unity; the *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* were far from being its unquestioned charter. On the contrary, only a few years after the party had again become legal with the abrogation of Bismarck's anti-socialist law, and had, at its Erfurt congress in 1891, adopted a programme essentially Marxist in character, a theoretical debate opened which was concerned not with the correctness or incorrectness of particular predictions made by Marx, but with the very core of the Marxist system. This trend in the SPD, which revealed crucial doubts in Marxism long before the first world war, came to be known as revisionism.

Much of what the revisionists of those days regarded as dubious and contradictory in Marx has reappeared like a ghost in the discussions and speeches and writings concerned with the 're-orientation' of the SPD; many of the critical insights are now presented by friends and enemies of the SPD as new discoveries. The break in the continuity of development of German social-democracy under the Hitler regime may have been responsible for the oblivion into which knowledge of revisionism fell, so that it is believed that a completely new start must be made. Those who think so seem to forget that from the very beginning there was in Germany, as indeed in all Western and Central Europe, not only an orthodox Marxist tradition but also one which took up a critical attitude to Marxism. Those movements which today present themselves as undogmatic and libertarian socialism continue, even if unconsciously, this tradition. Even in the relaxation that has occurred in the totalitarian countries of Eastern Europe there are elements that seem to derive from this tradition, and the Stalinist and post-Stalinist guardians of orthodoxy in the Kremlin are not altogether wrong when they accuse the heretics in the communist parties of those countries, particularly Poland, of revisionism.

An examination of the origins of revisionism in the nineties of last century is therefore something far more than a purely academic contribution to party history; it has a marked relevance to the political situation today.

WHAT is roughly described as revisionism is in fact more than a heretical playing with ideas by a few intellectuals; revisionism is the outcome of an inescapable dilemma confronting a mass political party whose original theory started from a radical rejection of the existing order, but which in practice is committed to the laborious day-to-day struggle for

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political success. Revisionism reflects this gulf between theory and practice, and it was a gulf that became visible with the end of the heroic age of socialism, which in Germany came with the end of the anti-socialist laws, that is, in the nineties of the nineteenth century. As early as those years German social-democracy took the decision, as far as its practice went, in favour of the legal parliamentary road to power, without at first being aware of its essential incompatibility with the theory which it had adopted.

This presentation of the contradiction is not intended to lessen in any way the service rendered by Eduard Bernstein, the founder of revisionism; it is merely to show that in the nineties revisionism was, so to speak, in the air, that it did not arise from the isolated thought of one individual; on the contrary, one of the fathers of historical materialism, whose life extended into the nineties, Friedrich Engels himself, could not avoid the kind of question which disturbed Bernstein.

Bernstein was born on 6 January, 1850 in Berlin; he was thus one of the second generation of theoreticians and practicians of the labour movement, which included, among many others, Kautsky, Plekhanov, Kropotkin, Bebel, Jaurès, and Sidney Webb. He came of a Jewish working-class family, and attended high school to the age of sixteen, after which he started training in a bank. In 1872 he joined the Eisenach wing of the social-democrats. At that time the Eisenachers were by no means the Marxist wing of the German labour movement. The disagreements between them and the followers of Lassalle were concerned more with personalities and with everyday political affairs than with theoretical principles. Bernstein was sent as a delegate to the congress in Gotha in 1875 at which the two wings amalgamated, and then took an active and successful part in the work of the Berlin SPD, speaking at meetings and conducting evening classes. In 1878, shortly before the anti-socialist law was promulgated, he received an offer, which he accepted, which took him to Switzerland. Karl Hochberg, a Zürich philanthropist and 'armchair socialist', engaged him as his secretary, and Bernstein became a regular contributor to *Sozialdemokrat*, the SPD's organ in exile.

It was at this time that he acquired his familiarity with Marxism. In 1878 Engels' *Anti-Dühring* appeared, a book which made a far greater impact on the elite of the German labour movement than did *Capital*, and which became in a sense the Marxist Bible. Bernstein too was at first deeply influenced by this book, and it is indeed one which must have a central place in any study of the impact of Marxism in Western Europe and Russia as well as Germany.

In 1880 Bernstein and Bebel went to London to visit Marx and Engels, principally to dispel the misgivings which these two entertained about the secretary of a man like Hochberg, whom they counted of little worth. The mission accomplished, Bernstein was entrusted with the editorship of *Sozialdemokrat*, and in this capacity he carried on a constant and friendly correspondence with Engels. Marx died in 1883, and Engels became the authoritative dispenser of the Marxian treasury of ideas. This was true for Bernstein as well as for Kautsky, who since 1880 had also been living in exile in Switzerland, the two having become close friends.

Under pressure from Bismarck, the Swiss government in 1888 prohibited the publication of a number of articles in *Sozialdemokrat* and Bernstein had to transfer his editorial activities to London, where he resumed close contact with Engels. It was a curious turn of fate that when, in 1890, the anti-socialist law was abrogated, Bernstein was not allowed to return to Germany, where the charges against him were still in force. It was not till 1901 that he returned to his homeland. This long enforced stay in London compelled him to make a study of the English political scene and the labour movement, and brought him into touch with the Fabian Society, founded in 1883, and, even more important, though it is usually overlooked, kept him for five decisive years, from 1890 to 1895, close to Engels.

IT can thus be said that Bernstein's development towards revisionism took place under Engels' very eyes. Until Engels' death in 1895 there is no trace of differences between the two,

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although Engels bent a somewhat critical eye on Bernstein's connexion with the Fabians. But he made Bernstein his executor, and entrusted him and Bebel with his literary remains. The first articles which marked Bernstein's departure from orthodox Marxism were not published till 1896, after Engels' death, in Kautsky's *Neue Zeit*, under the title 'Problems of Socialism'.[1]

It is therefore idle to speculate what Engels' reaction would have been; but it is not without point to enquire whether the first shoots of a revisionist theory cannot be detected in the later writings of Engels himself.

The most important document from this point of view is his preface to the new edition of Marx's *Class Struggles in France*. Marx wrote this shortly after the 1848 revolution in France, and it appeared as a series of articles in the *Revue der Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung* in 1850. These were put together and published as a book for the first time by Engels in 1895. Publication was not unconnected with the political situation in Germany at the time. The Reich government had drafted a bill 'to amend and supplement the penal code, the military penal code, and the law relating to the press', which would have greatly increased the penalties for incitement to rebellion and the overthrow of the government by violence. The social-democrats were deeply concerned to demonstrate that they had chosen the legal road to power, and it was due in no small measure to the able tactics of the SPD in the Reichstag that the bill was defeated. Engels' preface to the *Class Struggles in France* must be seen in this context. The communists have accused the SPD presidium of falsifying the preface by suppressing important passages, to suit their domestic political purposes at the time. A comparison of Engels' original text (first published by Riazanov in 1924) and the preface as it was published shows that a few passages were omitted which might have impaired the position of the SPD Reichstag fraction in the debates on the bill. But the deletions were made with Engels' consent, as is clearly shown in the letter from Richard Fischer to Engels published by Bernstein in 1926.[2]

The preface was dated 6 March, 1895; Engels died on 5 August of the same year. In a sense, therefore, the thoughts put down in those last five months can be regarded as Engels' political testament. At the very heart of his reflections stands the question of the right road to socialism. What will be the process by which socialism replaces capitalism? In the years at the turn of the century this became the central problem within the socialist movement, not only for the revisionists, but also, for example, for the Russian social-democrats. Marx had left behind no completely unambiguous theory for the takeover of political power by the proletariat, and when Engels turned his attention to this subject in 1895 there was no question of his revising Marx; what he was trying to do was to fill in the general framework of Marx's utterances on this particular section of socialist theory with concrete references drawn from the social situation as it had changed in the years since 1848. How ambiguous Marx's utterances were can be judged from the fact that in his theory of revolution Lenin thought that his ideas were completely in harmony with Marx.

In his preface Engels starts from the situation in the middle of the century and admits that at that time he had been mistaken in his estimate of the chances of success for socialism: 'History showed that we were wrong, revealed that our views at that time were an illusion'. His words imply a clear renunciation of the French revolution as a model for the proletarian revolution, and already show the discrepancy between his thought and that of Lenin later. Engels thought that it was a characteristic of all previous revolutions that their vehicle was a minority; what distinguished the socialist revolution, on the other hand, was that it would have to be accomplished by a majority of the population. In 1848 that was not yet the case; the proletariat was a minority. But now, at the turn of the century, the position had changed.

How was this increase in the size of the proletariat manifested? Firstly, in the progress of

[1] The articles, which appeared in volumes XV and XVI of *Neue Zeit* (1896-1898), were collected and published in book form in 1901 under the title *Zur Geschichte und Theorie des Sozialismus*.

[2] *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, I. 'Umsturz und Sozialdemokratie'.

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industrialisation, and secondly—and here Engels approaches close to revisionism—in the election figures. And the socialist parties had to concentrate on long-term persistent work in the parliamentary sphere; this lesson applied not only to Germany, but to all countries, including Russia. But German social-democracy was to be the pioneer in the new venture.

THESE ideas bear a very strong suggestion of Bernstein's thesis of the 'peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism' which lies at the heart of revisionist theory, even if Engels does not deny that at the end force and revolution will have to play their part, as the revisionists did later. But in so far as he postponed the day of the final struggle to a remote future and cautioned socialists to be circumspect in the meantime, he helped to make the transfer of the strategy and tactics of revisionism from the field of practical politics to the field of theory. In his address to the Stuttgart congress of the SPD Bernstein referred explicitly to Engels' preface to clear himself of the charge of heresy.

Other indications of a certain departure from rigid Marx-orthodoxy can be seen in Engels' letters to Josef Bloch (who was later to publish the *Sozialistische Monatshefte,* the revisionist organ), dated 21 September, 1890, to Conrad Schmidt, who later also adopted revisionist policies, dated 27 October, 1890, and to Heinz Starkenburg, dated 25 January, 1894.[3]

These letters are concerned with interpretations of historical materialism, more precisely, with the relations between the economic base and the political, juridical, and spiritual superstructure, and in them Engels emphasises the specific importance of the non-economic factors in the historical process.

Bernstein fastened on to these letters. He used a passage from the letter to Bloch as a motto for one section of the first chapter of his *Voraussetzungen* in which he gives a full analysis of the three letters. Of course, Bernstein's conclusions went far beyond anything that Engels had said and in the end broke up the entire system of historical materialism. His first critical work, *Probleme des Sozialismus* (the articles published between 1896 and 1898) questioned certain particular predictions made by Marx; the decisive step away from Marx followed in 1899 when he published his *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie,* and the line of argument was continued in 1901 with his small work *Wie ist wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus möglich?*

Bernstein arrived at his critical attitude towards some particular Marxist predictions not merely from an examination of the political situation in Germany in the nineties, which was marked by the electoral successes of the SPD—a phenomenon which, as we have seen, was not without its influence on Engels—but equally from the picture presented by economic conditions. The nineties were a period of great prosperity; no significant crisis disturbed the steady growth of the German national economy. The prospect held out in the Erfurt programme, 'The army of superfluous workers will become ever greater, the crises inherent in the nature of the capitalist mode of production will become more extensive and devastating', was flatly contradicted by the economic reality, for the workers too had their share of the benefits of economic expansion. Bernstein, who once said of himself that 'The decisive influences on my thinking as a socialist were not of a doctrinaire kind, but facts, which forced me to correct the ideas underlying my beliefs', and who because of his familiarity with the English way of looking at things was more free of prejudice in his observation of facts than other Marxists such as Kautsky, was bound to be struck by this discrepancy between theory and reality. At first, therefore, his criticism was directed primarily against the prediction of the increasing impoverishment of the proletariat with its closely related contention that capitalist crises would grow more severe and lead rapidly to the collapse of the capitalist system.

After a careful examination of the relevant statistics, Bernstein came to the conclusion that capitalism itself had developed from within itself a number of stabilising factors which made an early collapse of capitalist society highly improbable. As production increased, so did mass

[3] Published in *Dokumente des Sozialismus*, ed. by Bernstein, Stuttgart, 1903, II, p. 65 ff.

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consumption, and the real income of the workers was raised. Bernstein discovered a trend that was making in the precisely opposite direction from impoverishment, and analogous arguments against increasingly acute crises.

One of the most important stabilising factors, incompatible with the Marxist schema of the development of capitalist society, was in Bernstein's view the growing differentiation within society. Things were not developing towards that concentration into two sharply opposed classes foreseen by Marx, a growing army of proletarians on one side, and on the other a class of capitalists, ever smaller in numbers but greater in wealth; on the contrary, there was growing differentation within the classes. On a careful statistical basis Bernstein tried to show that the middle classes were successfully resisting the trend towards large-scale undertakings.

First of all, there was no trend towards concentration in the occupations providing services (Bernstein even at that time was aware of the importance of these branches of the economy), in trade, and above all in agriculture. Medium sized farms had even shown themselves to be superior to large farms. He observed the rise of a new middle class of officials and office workers, and noted that it was important for the industrial workers to win these new groups as allies. Moreover, Bernstein claimed to have proved that differentiation, and not concentration, could be observed not only in classes but also in the distribution of incomes. For him, finally, exploitation was to be measured not in economic but in ethical terms. 'Exploitation, where it refers to the relations between men, always means the morally objectionable use of one man by another, means—as the root of the word suggests—robbery in a disguised form'.[4]

THIS conclusion brings Bernstein to a decisive turning point. Criticism of particular Marxist predictions does not by any means imply the breakup of the system of historical materialism. In itself it may be regarded as no more than a changed attitude, arising from the force of facts, towards the tempo of the historical process, a process at the end of which, now as before, stands socialism. But Bernstein went beyond this 'minor revision' and so placed the very core of Marxism in question. The break was finally accomplished in an address he gave in Berlin in 1901, shortly after his return from England. He deliberately chose to put the question, how is scientific socialism possible? in Kantian terms; he threw economic determinism overboard and transferred the justification of the struggle for socialism from the world of what is into the world of what ought to be. For him socialism had become both postulate and programme, not the scientific recognition of the laws of historical development. This address was the forerunner of all subsequent efforts to make the Kantian ethic serve as the reasoning underlying socialism.

What practical conclusions did Bernstein draw from his theoretical views for the policy of the SPD? In the first place, the road to political power for social-democracy lay through Parliament; this was nothing new, since the SPD had been following that road since 1890. What was new, what Bernstein called for, was the theoretical recognition of the road that had long been followed in practice. The decisive assumptions which for Marx were to lead to the proletarian revolution, the concentration of capital and the numerical growth of the working class, had not been realised and Bernstein doubted whether they ever would be. In these circumstances the cardinal task for social-democracy was to win and to improve political democracy. But this was not all that was required. There must in addition be federalism, local autonomy and self government, and self government he extends not only to the political but also to the economic domain. Consequently he regarded the establishment of consumer co-operatives as a means to promote socialism. His attitude to producer co-operatives was sceptical, although he admitted that they might be successful if established in conjunction with consumer co-operatives. He also advocated

[4] E. Bernstein, *Wie ist wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus möglich?* (Berlin, 1901), p. 12. The words used in the original are *Ausbeutung*, exploitation, and *Beute*, booty or prey.

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that socialists should take a larger interest in artisan, handicraft, and peasant co-operatives.

Trade Unions, too, were one element in democracy and self government. In some passages of the *Voraussetzungen* there are even hints of the current practice of co-determination (Mitbestimmung). As far as foreign policy was concerned, Bernstein thought the SPD should pay greater attention to the national factor.

Today most of this appears to us platitudinous, and it had already been embodied in the policy of the SPD before 1914. But it had not been adopted in official theory. The refusal of the party leaders to abandon the traditional Marxist ideology explains the verdict of the Dresden party congress on revisionism. The opening paragraph of the resolution adopted there ran:

> The congress condemns emphatically the revisionist efforts to change our tactics, based on the class struggle, which have been tested and crowned with success, in such a way as to replace the capture of political power by defeating our enemies by a policy of accommodating ourselves to the existing order. The result of such revisionist tactics would be to make of the party one that is content with the reform of bourgeois society instead of one that is working for the quickest possible transformation of the existing bourgeois order into a socialist society.

Bernstein did not allow himself to be put off by this resolution. In 1898, in self-conscious pride, he had written to the Stuttgart congress: 'The vote of an assembly, however high its standing, cannot of course turn me from the views I have gained from the examination of social phenomena'. But it was in no small measure as a result of the Dresden resolution that from then on social-democracy was regarded by many as hostile to the intelligentsia and intellectually intolerant, and that the SPD was far less successful than the Labour Party in winning intellectuals to its cause. As far as practice went, the SPD continued its revisionist policy, but almost always with an uncertain and tentative air, as in the question of a coalition with bourgeois parties, not least because the official condemnation of revisionist theory made it impossible to bring theory and practice into harmony.

FOR Bebel and the other party leaders Marxism became, more and more, the ideology which helped to hold the different tendencies in the party together. It was believed that this was the only way of avoiding a split in the party and of keeping the allegiance of the masses, and at party congresses speakers frequently denied the practice of their daily work; when 1918 came they were scarcely if at all equipped to take over the government.

The fate of the SPD was shared by almost all parties of the Second International on the European continent. The dispute about revisionism in Germany had its parallel in other parties about the right road to socialism, in part independently of the German presentation of the question, even though the debate arose from the same complex of problems, in part directly caused by it. But nowhere, before 1914, did revisionism succeed in becoming official party theory. Even the great *tribun du peuple* Jean Jaurès, whose life bore the impress of the idealist philosophy with which he started, and who, like Bernstein, advocated resolute attention to the tasks of the day, met with opposition in the French Socialist Party.

In Russia the revisionists suffered a tragic fate. There the disputes in the German party had particularly serious repercussions, for the Russian social-democrats had always followed the SPD closely, regarding it as the great exponent of the theory and practice of the political struggle. From about the turn of the century the revisionist quarrel took root in Russia; it is true that there it was set going not so much by the discrepancy between Marxist theory and the changed social reality—for capitalism had not progressed nearly so far in Russia as in Western Europe—as by the doubts entertained by many Russian intellectuals, Marxists until then, in the philosophical foundations of the Marxist system. The inclination of the Russian mind to speculation, much stronger than the German, may have been in part responsible. It was the neo-Kantianism then being taught in the German universities, particularly in Marburg, which attracted many Russian Marxists, including Nikolai Berdyaev, later to become a Christian philosopher, and the economist Peter Struve; it led them to a critical re-examination

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of the sociological and economic, as well as philosophical views of Marx. For a time revisionism gained the upper hand among the Petersburg revolutionary intelligentsia.

That revisionism was unable to maintain the lead in the long run was due above all to the fierce resistance of one man, no other than Lenin. While still in exile in eastern Siberia, he took up the battle in the sharpest terms with his former friends, and used in support of his argument the rejection by the leaders of German social-democracy of Bernstein's thesis. It was in fighting the Russian variety of revisionism that Lenin elaborated his own ideology. The greater rigidity and dogmatism which he introduced into Marxism can be partly explained by this conflict. That, in the course of the dispute, Lenin arrived at theoretical and practical conclusions which estranged him from the official policy of the German party can only be mentioned here in passing, since a fuller treatment would take us too far afield.

In any case, the outcome in Russia was a defeat for revisionism, and the Mensheviks, like the German social-democrats, continued to swing irresolutely between radical theory and pragmatic practice, while the Bolsheviks elevated Lenin's interpretation of Marxism to unassailable dogma. The triumph of the Bolsheviks in the October revolution and the creation of the Third International, did nothing to create a more favourable climate for revisionism in western and central Europe in the years after the war. On the contrary; the SPD was it is true now sharing in the government, but ideological competition from the communists prevented them from drawing the theoretical consequences from the real political situation. The discrepancy between programme-theory and daily activities, fatally obvious even before 1914, could not be eliminated by the SPD in the Weimar Republic. It is true that the Goerlitz programme of 1921, in drafting which Bernstein took a decisive hand, was revisionist in spirit, but after amalgamation with the USPD (independent socialists) it was replaced in 1925 by the programme adopted at the Heidelberg congress, which reverted to the Erfurt tradition; but this was as little able to bridge the gulf between theory and practice as the earlier one had been.

The efforts of the founder of revisionism and his collaborators appeared to have been in vain. When Bernstein died in 1932, his funeral was indeed made the occasion for a tremendous demonstration by the social-democratic workers of Berlin; but six weeks later the brownshirts marched through the Brandenburg Tor and German social-democracy faced the biggest defeat in its history. Under the impact of this defeat the German social-democrats began, even in the years of Hitler's dictatorship, to think afresh, and this was reflected in the official programme adopted in 1945 and in the platforms worked out in 1952 (Dortmund) and 1954 (Berlin). The abandonment of a dogma made sacred by tradition now found expression not only in practical socialist policy—there was nothing new in that—but also in its programme. The chief aim of the revisionists, to bring SPD theory and practice into harmony, was thus reasserted, even though in the meantime changes in society had made certain of Bernstein's particular contentions out of date.

The change is revealed most clearly in the basic programme adopted at the Bad Godesberg congress in November 1959. In contrast to all former programmes, which invariably began with an analysis of the dominant trends in social development, on which predictions about the future course of events were then hung, the Godesberg programme opens with a declaration of the enduring 'fundamental values of socialism', of freedom and justice. From these, and not from any insight into purportedly inescapable laws of historical development, socialist policy in its various spheres of activity is deduced. The harnessing of socialism to the realm of what should be, the turn towards a philosophic idealism, for which Bernstein was one of the first to call, has thus been officially embodied in the programme of German social-democracy. The phrase in the Godesberg programme, that democratic socialism does not proclaim any final truths, breathes Bernstein's sober pragmatic spirit; it is no exaggeration to say that, after more than half a century, revisionism has at last triumphed in democratic socialist theory in Germany.

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IN SEARCH OF MARXIST HUMANISM

The Debate on Alienation

Daniel Bell*

THERE is today, in England and in France, a renewed interest in Marx. One sees this in the pages of the English *Universities and Left Review*, and the French *Arguments*, the magazines of the post-Stalinist left-wing generation in these countries. One hears this in detailed discussion of the writings of the Polish and East German 'revisionists', and particularly of the 'subterranean' ideas of Georg Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher, one of the sources of revisionism. One reads this in the literary journals, such as Lucien Goldmann's long essay 'La Réification', in the February-March 1959 issue of *Les Temps Modernes*.

This new interest revolves around the theme of alienation. Marx is read not as an economist or political theorist—not for the labour theory of value or the falling rate of profit, not for the theory of the State or even of social classes, and certainly not as the founder of dialectical materialism—but as a philosopher who first laid bare the estrangement of man from an oppressive society. Alienation is taken to be the critical tool of the Marxist method, and the new canon is derived from the early, and in his lifetime unpublished, philosophical manuscripts of Marx. Even non-Marxists accept this new emphasis. Thus in Père Jean-Yves Calvez's comprehensive *La Pensée de Karl Marx*, published in 1956, four hundred and forty of a total of six hundred and forty pages are devoted to the concept of alienation and its use in social and political analysis.

All of this is rather novel. Rarely in the thirties, for example, when the first burst of Marxist scholarship occurred, did one find in the exegetical and expository writings on Marx a discussion of alienation. In Sidney Hook's

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The idea of alienation as *derived* from Marx, and employed by intellectuals today, has a double meaning which can best be distinguished as *estrangement* and *reification*. The first is essentially a socio-psychological condition in which the individual experiences a sense of distance, or a divorce from his society or his community; he cannot belong, he is deracinated. The second, a philosophical category with psychological overtones, implies that an individual is treated as an object and turned into a *thing* and loses his identity in the process; in contemporary parlance, he is depersonalized. The two shades of meaning, of estrangement and depersonalization, are sociologically quite distinct.

As Marx used the term, alienation equally had a double, yet obliquely different set of meanings from current usage. The first, of *Entäusserung*, implies the 'externalization' of aspects of one's self, with the overtone that such externalization comes through the sale (in a legal-commercial sense) of one's labour. The product that one sells remains as an object, independent of one's self, but one with which there is the twofold sense of identification and loss. The second term, of *Entfremdung*, implies simple estrangement, or the detaching of one's self from another, of divorce. (Feuerbach's usage, while emphasizing the fact that in religion one externalizes part of one's self, tended to emphasize the sense of estrangement.)

These double usages by Marx are found in the early manuscripts and the unpublished philosophical works. In his later writings, the psychological nuances of the term 'alienation' have disappeared, and in the form in which the idea of alienation appears in *Capital*, as the 'fetishism of commodities,' it is clearly in the idea of *reification*. People buy commodities, things, not realizing that each commodity has 'embedded' within it labour power, nor are they aware of the social organization required to produce and distribute products. A serf has a direct obligation to a lord and the relationship is naked and direct. The exchange of products in a market 'hides' the social relationships because the personal ties have become impersonal, and labour, both in the creation of commodities and in the sale of its own labour power, is now an object.

The contemporary use of alienation, as estrangement, is a far cry from the transmuted ideas of alienation as used by Marx in *Capital*. And to a considerable extent, the current usage 'reads back' into Marx overtones of contemporary society that were only dimly heard at the time.

In tracing the idea of alienation, in the present essay, I am concerned largely with the meanings which are present, I think, in the early writings. The larger ambiguous term of alienation is retained because the contemporary political debate begins with that concept.

For a discussion of the terminology, see translator's note to the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* (English-language edition, pp. 10-13), and the citations in Note 6 below.

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pioneer account of Marx's intellectual development, *From Hegel to Marx*, published in 1936, the word 'alienation' does not occur *once* in the text. It was not, of course, that Hook was unaware of the idea of alienation and the role it played in Hegelian thought. (His book, based on these early manuscripts, had traced in patient detail Marx's thought to his immediate forebears: to Feuerbach, who, in his discussion of religion, had developed the concept of alienation; to Bruno Bauer, who had emphasized the 'critical method' in philosophy; to Moses Hess, who first sketched the picture of humanistic communism; and to the other young Hegelians for whom the relationship of freedom to necessity was the paramount concern.) But the intellectual problem for Hook, as it was for *all* 'classical' Marxists, was, first, a defence of the idea of materialism as a viable modern philosophy—and this Hook sought to do by reading Marx uniquely as a naturalist—and, second, to resolve the 'contradiction' between Marx's social determinism (i.e., that one's consciousness and knowledge are shaped by one's existence and class position), and Marx's, and Lenin's, class teleology (or the fact that socialist purpose and goal are instilled into the worker from the 'outside')[1]—and this Hook sought to do by reading Marx as a pragmatist. The intellectual issue for Marxists in the thirties was the validity of historical materialism.

Different times, different *Zeitgeist*. The reason for this change is clear. In Europe today, a school of neo-Marxists, having rejected Stalinism (and, implicitly, historical materialism, which, in its projection of 'higher' stages of society, had been used to justify the Bolshevik use of terror), has gone back to Marx's early writings to find a new humanist foundation for Socialism. The revisionist philosophers in Eastern Europe do so to find doctrinal support against the official party theologues. The French post-Stalinists, such as Lucien Goldmann or Edgar Morin, see in the idea of alienation a more sophisticated radical critique of contemporary society than the simplified and stilted Marxist analysis of class. And the young English socialists, such as Charles Taylor of All Souls College, see in the concept of alienation a means of reformulating the idea of community.

While all this is a fresh, and even fruitful, way of making a criticism of contemporary society, it is *not* the 'historical Marx'. For, as the following analysis argues, Marx had repudiated the idea of alienation divorced from his specific economic analysis of property relations under capitalism, and, in so doing, had closed off a road which would have given us a broader and more useful analysis of society and personality than the Marxian dogmatics which did prevail. While one may be sympathetic to the idea of alienation, it is only further myth-making to read this concept back as the central theme of Marx. As a political effort by the revisionists, bound within the Marxist camp, it may have some polemical value. As a stage of the pilgrim's progress of those coming out of the Marxist forest, it is understandable. As an intellectual effort, it is false. If the concept of alienation is to have any meaning, it must stand on its own feet, without the crutch of Marx. This, then, is the burden of this paper.

FOR the 'left-Hegelians', the teachers and colleagues of Marx, the chief task of philosophy was to specify the conditions under which 'Man' could achieve his freedom. They accepted the question which Hegel had opened up; they were dissatisfied with his formulation of the problem.

The goal of Man, Hegel had said, was freedom, a condition, he defined, in which man would be self-willed and where his 'essence' would become his own possession—in which he would regain his 'self'. But man was 'separated' from his essence and bound by two conditions which seemed inherent in the world: necessity and alienation. Necessity meant a dependence on nature and the acceptance of the limitations which nature imposed on men, both in the sense of the limitation of natural resources and the limitations of physical strength. Alienation, in its original connotation, was the radical dissociation of the 'self' into both actor and thing, into a *subject* that strives to control

[1] A troublesome issue that still remains unresolved in Marxist theory, for if the intellectuals create the social ideology, while the workers, left to themselves, achieve only trade union consciousness, as Lenin maintained, what, then, is the meaning of Marx's statement that existence determines consciousness, and that class fashions ideology?

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its own fate, and an *object* which is manipulated by others.[2] In the development of science, man could, perhaps, overcome necessity and master nature. But how was one to overcome the Orphic separateness of subject and object? Alienation was an ontological fact, in the structure of grammar as well as of life; for the self was not just an 'I' seeking to shape the world according to its intentions, but also a 'me', an object whose identity is built up by the pictures that others have of 'me'. Thus the condition of complete freedom, in which the self seeks only to be an 'I', a shaper of events in accordance with its own will, rather than being shaped by others, is a seeming impossibility. In the face of this irreducible dualism of subject-object, of 'I' and 'me', how does one achieve the goal of being 'self-willed'?

Bruno Bauer, one of the first teachers and friends of Marx, felt that the solution lay in developing a 'critical' philosophy which exposed the 'mystery' of human relationships (i.e., the *real* motives behind social acts). Most human beings born into the world, said Bauer, simply accept it and are oblivious to the sources of their morals and beliefs, of their rationality and irrationality; they are 'determined' by the world. By subjecting all beliefs to criticism, however, men would become self-conscious, reason would be restored to them, and therewith their self-possession. The overcoming of the dualism, therefore, was to be through the achievement of self-consciousness.

Feuerbach, to whom Marx gave credit for making the first real breach in the system of Hegelian abstractions, sought to locate the source of alienation in religious superstition and fetishism. The most radical of all the left-Hegelians, Feuerbach called himself Luther II. Where Luther had sought to demolish an institution that mediated between Man and God, the second Luther sought to destroy God himself. Man would be free, he said, if he could demythologize religion. Man was bound because he took the best of himself, his sensibility, and projected it onto some external object, or spirit, which he called divine.[3] But the history of all thought was a history of progressive disenchantment, and if, finally, in Christianity, the image of God had been transformed from a parochial river deity into a universal abstraction, the function of criticism—using the radical tool of alienation or self-estrangement—was to replace theology by anthropology, to dethrone God and enthrone Man. The way to overcome alienation was to bring the divine back into man, to reintegrate himself through a religion of humanity, through a religion of self-love. Men's relation to each other, said Feuerbach, in first employing terms that, ironically, were adopted later by Martin Buber for religious purposes, had to be on an I-Thou basis.[4] Philosophy was to be directed to life, man was to be liberated from the 'spectre of abstractions' and released from the thongs of the supernatural Religion was only capable of creating 'false consciousness'. Philosophy would reveal 'true consciousness'. And, by placing Man rather than God at the centre of consciousness, Feuerbach sought to bring the 'infinite into the finite'.

This uncompromising attack on religion was equally a sharp attack on all established institutions. But beyond that, the spreading use of the concept of alienation had a more radical consequence in the minds of the left-Hegelians, because it initiated a direct break in the history of philosophy by ushering in the period of modernity. In classical philosophy, the ideal man was the contemplative one. Neither the middle ages nor the transitional period to contemporary times (the 17th to the mid-19th century) was ever wholly able to detach itself from the ideal of the Stoa. Even Goethe, who gave us in Faust the first modern man, the man of ambition unchained, reverted, in his ethical image of the human ideal, to the Greek. In discussing freedom, however, Hegel had introduced a new principle, the principle of *action;* for man, in order to realize his self, had to strive actively to overcome the subject-object dualism

[2] 'For freedom', says Hegel in his *Logic,* 'it is necessary that we should feel no presence of something, which is not ourselves.' Finitude is bondage, the consciousness of an object is a limitation; freedom is 'that voyage into the open where nothing is below us or above us, and we stand in solitude with ourselves alone' (Wallace edition, pp. 49, 66, cited by Robert Tucker; see footnote 6 below).

[3] See Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (Harper Torchbook edition, 1957), p. 30.

[4] For a discussion of Feuerbach's use of the I-Thou concept, see the introduction by Karl Barth to *The Essence of Christianity, ibid.,* p. xiii.

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that bound him. In action a man finds himself; by his choices he defines his character. For Hegel, however, the principle of action had remained abstract. In Feuerbach, while the principle of alienation is sharply defined and the source of alienation is located in religion, an abstraction remains because Feuerbach was talking of Man in general. In Marx, action was given specificity in a radical new emphasis on *work*. Man becomes man, becomes alive through work, for through work man loses his isolation and becomes a social or co-operative being, and thus learns of himself: and through work he is able to transform nature as well.[5]

In locating man's alienation in work, Marx had taken the revolutionary step of grounding philosophy in concrete human activity. The road by which he 'freed' himself from the Hegelian tyranny of abstraction was a long and difficult one.[6] As a Hegelian, Marx thought first of the alienation of work in terms of idealistic dualities. Man, in working, reifies himself in objective things (i.e., in products which embody his work). This is *labour (Arbeit)* and is part of the 'alien and hostile world standing over against him'. In labour, man is 'under the domination, compulsion and yoke of another man'. Against this is the state of freedom where man would transform nature, and himself, by free, conscious, spontaneous, creative work. Two things stood in the way of achieving this freedom: the fact that in the alienation of work man lost control over the *process* of work, and lost control, too, of the *product* of his labour.[7] For Marx, therefore, the answer to Hegel was clear: the alienation of man lay not in some philosophical abstraction of Mind, but in the property system. In the organization of work —in labour becoming a commodity—man became an object used by others, and unable, therefore, to obtain satisfaction in his own activity. By becoming himself a commodity, he lost his sense of identity; he lost the sense of 'himself'.

The extraordinary thing was that Marx had taken a concept which German philosophy had seen as an ontological fact, and had given it a social content. As ontology, as an ultimate, man could only accept alienation. As a social fact, rooted in a specific system of historical relations, alienation could be overcome by changing the social system. But in narrowing the concept, Marx ran two risks: of falsely identifying the source of alienation only in the private property system; and of introducing a note of utopianism in the idea that once the private property system was abolished man would immediately be free.

THE question of why men were propertyless turned Marx to economics. For a man whose name is so inextricably linked with the 'dismal science', Marx was never really interested in economics. His correspondence with Engels in later years is studded with contemptuous references to the subject and he resented the fact that his detailed explorations prevented him from carrying on other studies. But he continued because, for him, economics was the practical side of philosophy—it would unveil the mystery of alienation—and because he had found in the categories of political economy the material expression of that alienation: the process of economic exploitation.

This development is seen most clearly in the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, which Marx had written in 1844 at the age of twenty-six. The *Manuscripts*, in the history of Marxist thought, is the bridge from the left-Hegelianism of the early Marx to the Marxism we have come

[5] The key statement of this idea in Marx is to be found, first, in the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. An English edition was published in Moscow in 1959. See pp. 67-84, and especially pages 73-77. A more condensed version of this idea is to be found in Part One of *The German Ideology* (International Publishers, 1939), esp. pp. 7-8.

[6] A comprehensive exposition of the early views of Marx can be found in Robert C. Tucker, *The Self and Revolution: A Moral Critique of Marx*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Harvard, 1957). This study, revised and expanded, will be published by the Cambridge University Press under the title, *The Alienated World of Karl Marx*. I am indebted to Mr. Tucker for many insights. A lucid discussion of the nature of Marx's early writings can be found in Jean Hippolyte's *Etudes sur Marx et Hegel* (Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1955), especially pp. 147-155. An overly simple exposition can be found in H. P. Adams, *Karl Marx in his Early Writings* (London, 1940); a provocative discussion in Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958).

[7] For a further discussion, see Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (New York, 1941), pp. 276-277.

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to know. The title itself is both literal and symbolic. Beginning as an anthropology it ends as a political economy. In it one finds the first conceptualization of alienation as rooted in work (rather than in abstract spirit, or religion), and the beginnings of the analysis of property. And in the analysis of property, one finds the direct transmutation, which is so crucial in the development of Marx's thought, of philosophical into economic categories.

In search for an answer to Hegel's question, Marx had sought to pin down concretely the ways in which the human being was 'robbed' of his potential possibilities of realizing his 'self'. For Feuerbach, religion was the means whereby man was alienated from himself; for in religion man externalized his real 'self'. For Marx, now, the idea of the 'self' had become too abstract. The key to the problem was the nature of work—the process whereby man became a social being—but the question remained as to what barred man from realizing his full nature in work. The answer, he thought, lay in the operation of the property system. But how? In the capitalist system, in the bargain made between worker and employer, the individual was formally free. What, then was the means whereby a man, unbeknownst even to himself, was alienated and enslaved? Marx found the answer in money. Money is the most impersonal form of value. It is seemingly neutral. A man who has a direct obligation to another, as a serf does to a master, knows directly the source of power over him. But one who sells his labour power for money may feel himself to be free. The product of the labourer can thus be easily 'abstracted' into money and, through the exchange system, be 'abstracted' from him.[8]

Money, thus, is the concrete embodiment of the philosophical abstraction which Hegel had described airily as 'spirit', and the commodity process the means whereby the labourer, by exchanging his labour power for money, is robbed of his freedom unawares. Political economy became for Marx what religion was for Feuerbach, a means whereby human values are 'projected' outside of man and achieve an existence independent of him and over him. And so alienation, conceived initially by Marx as a process whereby an individual lost his capacity to express himself in work, now became seen as exploitation, or the appropriation of a labourer's surplus product by the capitalist. Thus a philosophical expression which embodies, actually, a socio-psychological insight became transformed into an economic category.

The irony, however, was that in moving from 'philosophy' to 'reality', from Hegelian phenomenology to political economy, Marx moved from one kind of abstraction to another. In his system, self-alienation became transformed: man as 'generic man' (i.e., Man writ large) becomes divided into classes of men.[9] For Marx now, the only social reality is not Man, nor the individual, but economic classes. Individuals and their motives count for naught.[10]. The only form of consciousness which can be translated into action—and which can explain history, past, present, and future—is class consciousness.

In *The German Ideology*, written in 1846, the idea of the 'self' has disappeared from Marx's writings. Marx now mocks the left-Hegelians for talking of 'human nature, of Man in general who belongs to no class, has no reality and subsists only in the realm of philosophical fantasy.' In attacking the 'true Socialist', Marx

[8] 'Money is the alienated *ability of mankind*. That which I am unable to do as a *man*, and of which, therefore all my individual powers are incapable, I am able to do by means of *money*. Money thus turns each of these powers into something which in itself it is not—turns it, that is, into its *contrary*.' *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, op. cit., p. 139 (italics in the original).

It is this conception of money as the hidden mechanism whereby people became exploited (money 'the common whore . . . [which] confounds all human and natural qualities') that lay behind Marx's withering analysis of the Jew, as the dealer in money, in economic society. It is this conception, too, that underlay the extraordinarily naive act of the Bolshevik regime in the first days after the October Revolution of abolishing all money in an effort to make the relationship of man to man 'direct'. The novel implications of this development in Marx's thought, of the *shift* in the early manuscripts from philosophy to political economy, have been explored in great detail by Professor Tucker (op. cit.).

[9] For a neglected discussion of the idea of 'generic man' and 'historical man' in Marx, see Solomon F. Bloom, *The World of Nations: A Study of the National Implications in the Work of Karl Marx* (New York, 1941), Chap. I, pp. 1-10.

[10] In *The German Ideology* Marx poses the question of how individual self-interest becomes trans-

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writes: 'It is characteristic of all these high-sounding phrases about liberation, etc., that it is always "man" who is liberated . . . it would appear from [their] claims that "wealth" and "money" have ceased to exist. . . .'[11]

In *The Communist Manifesto,* the attack is widened, and made cruelly sardonic. The German *literati,* says Marx, 'wrote their philosophical nonsense beneath the French original. For instance, beneath the French criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote "alienation of humanity". . . .' And mocking his erstwhile philosophical comrades, Marx speaks scornfully of 'this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their sorry "eternal truths" . . . the robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with the flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment.'[12]

IN saying that there is no human nature 'inherent in each separate individual', as Marx does in his sixth thesis on Feuerbach, but only social man, and then only classes, one introduces a new *persona.* Marx makes this explicit in his preface to *Capital,* written in 1867: 'Here individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can. less than any other, make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however he may subjectively raise himself above them'.

Thus, individual responsibility is turned into class morality, and the variability of individual action subsumed under impersonal mechanisms. And the ground is laid for the loss of freedom in a new tyranny that finds its justifications in the narrowed view of exploitation which Marx had fashioned.

To sum up the argument thus far: In his early philosophical writings, Marx had seen, against Hegel, that alienation or the failure to realize one's potential as a self, was rooted primarily in work, rather than in the abstract development of consciousness. In the organization of work, men become 'means' for the aggrandisement of others, rather than 'ends' in themselves. As alienated labour, there was a twofold loss: men lost control over the *conditions* of work, and men lost the *product* of their labour. This dual conception is present, in a different form, in the later Marx: the loss of control of work is seen as *dehumanization,* occasioned by the division of labour and intensified by technology; the loss of product, as *exploitation,* because a portion of man's labour (surplus value) was appropriated by the employer.

But except for literary and illustrative references in *Capital* to the dehumanization of labour and the fragmentation of work, this first aspect, as problem, was glossed over by Marx. In common with some later (bourgeois?) sociologists, Marx felt that there was no solution to the loss of 'self' in work inherent in technology. Under communism—in the 'final' society—the division of labour, the cause of dehumanization, would be eliminated so that by variety in work man would be able to develop his varied aptitudes. But these fragmentary discussions take on a

(*continued from p.* 25.)

formed into ideology. 'How does it come about', he asks, 'that personal interests grow, despite the persons, into class-interests, into common interests which win an independent existence over against individual persons, in this independence take on the shape of general interests, enter as such into opposition with the real individuals, and in this opposition, according to which they are defined as general interests, can be conceived by the consciousness as ideal, even as religious, sacred interests?'

Having posed the question so concisely, Marx, exasperatingly, never goes on to answer it. Sidney Hook, in his article on 'Materialism' in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* sought to rephrase the problem in these terms: 'What are the specific mechanisms by which the economic conditions influence the habits and motives of classes, granted that individuals are actuated by motives that are not always a function of individual self-interest? Since classes are composed of individuals, how are class interests furthered by the non-economic motives of individuals?' Having rephrased the question even more sharply, Hook, too, left it unanswered. So far no Marxist theoretician has detailed the crucial psychological and institutional nexuses which transform the personifications, or masks of class-role, into the self-identity of the individual.

See, *The German Ideology,* op. cit., p. 203; *E.S.S.,* Vol. X, p. 219; and the discussions by Robert Tucker.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 96.

[12] *The Communist Manifesto,* p. 233, in Karl Marx, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1935), Volume I.

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utopian hue.[13] In actuality one had to accept not only the division of labour, but hierarchical organization as well. In a polemic against some Italian anarchists who had argued that technology had imposed on man a 'veritable despotism', Engels argued that it was utopian to question the nature of authority in a factory: 'At least with regard to the hours of work one may write upon the portals of these factories: *Lasciate ogni autonomia, voi che entrate!* [leave, ye that enter in, all autonomy behind!]. If man by dint of his knowledge and inventive genius, has subdued the forces of nature, the latter avenge themselves upon him by subjecting him, insofar as he employs them, to a veritable despotism, independent of all social organization. Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to return to the spinning wheel'.[14]

What became central to *Capital* was the concrete social relationships created by private property, those of employer-and-employee, rather than the processes generated by manufacture. Dehumanization was a creature of technology; exploitation that of capitalism. The solution was simple, if one-sided: abolish private property, and the system of exploitation would disappear. 'In contemporary capitalist society men are dominated by economic relations created by themselves, by means of production which they have produced, as if by an alien power', said Engels. 'When society, by taking possession of all means of production and managing them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all of its members from the bondage in which they are at present held by means of production which they themselves have produced but which now confront them as irresistible, alien power; when consequently man no longer proposes, but also disposes—only then will the last alien power which is now reflected in religion vanish. And with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that there will be nothing left to reflect.'[15]

When critics argued that technological organization might still 'deform and debilitate' the worker, the Marxist called this utopian. When sceptics asserted that socialism itself might become an exploitative society, the Marxist had a ready answer: the source of exploitation, and of power, was economic, and political office was only an administrative extension of economic power; once economic power was socialized, there could no longer be classes, or a basis whereby man could exploit man. By this extension it became 'clear' that the Soviet Union was a 'workers' state', and no basis for exploitation existed. Thus the concept of alienation came, down one road, to a twisted end.

HAVING found the answer to the 'mysteries' of Hegel in political economy, Marx promptly forgot all about philosophy. ('The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world differently; the point, however, is to change it,' he had scrawled in his *Theses on Feuerbach*.) In 1846, Marx and Engels had completed a long criticism of post-Hegelian philosophy in two large octavo volumes and (except for some gnomic references in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875) neither of them returned to the subject until forty years later when Engels, after the death of Marx, was, to his surprise, asked by the *Neue Zeit*, the German Socialist theoretical magazine, to review a book on Feuerbach by C. N. Starcke, a then well-known anthropologist. Engels reluctantly consented and wrote a long review which, slightly expanded, was published two years later in 1888 as a small brochure entitled *Ludwig Feuerbach*

[13] In *Capital*, Marx writes powerfully of the crippling effects of the detailed division of labour, and then, in a footnote, quotes approvingly the image of work provided by a French workman who had returned from San Francisco: 'I never could have believed, that I was capable of working at various occupations I was employed on in California. I was firmly convinced that I was fit for nothing but letter-press printing. . . . Once in the midst of this world of adventurers, who change their occupation as often as they do their shirt, egad, I did as the others. As mining did not turn out remunerative enough, I left it for the town, where in succession I became typographer, slater, plumber, &c. In consequence of thus finding out that I am fit for any sort of work, I feel less of a mollusc and more of a man.' (Marx, *Capital*, Chicago 1906, Vol. I, Part IV, Section 9, especially pp. 532-535. The footnote is from p. 534.)

[14] F. Engels, 'On Authority,' in *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy*, edited by Lewis S. Feuer (Anchor Books, 1959), p. 483.

[15] Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Chicago, 1935), pp. 332-333.

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and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy. In writing the review Engels went back to some mouldering manuscripts of Marx and found among his papers the hastily scribbled eleven theses on Feuerbach, totalling in all a few pages, which he appended to the brochure. In the Foreword, Engels alludes to the large manuscript (without mentioning even its title, *The German Ideology*), and says merely that because of the reluctance of the publishers it was not printed. 'We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawings of the mice all the more willingly', wrote Engels, 'as we had achieved our main purpose—to clear our own minds'.[16] (The gnawing was literal, since many pages, in fact, had been completely chewed up!)

But it is also clear that while, as young philosophy students, the debates with the other young Hegelians were necessary for the purposes of 'self clarification', the absorption of both into concrete economic study and political activity had made the earlier philosophical problems increasingly unreal to them. In a letter to his American translator, Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky, in February 1886, Engels writes, a propos of his *Anti-Dühring*, 'the semi-Hegelian language of a good many passages of my old book is not only untranslatable but has lost the greater part of its meaning even in German.'[17] And in 1893 a Russian visitor to Engels, Alexis Voden, found Engels incredulous when the question of publishing the early philosophical manuscripts was raised. In a memoir, Voden recalled: 'Our next conversation was on the early works of Marx and Engels. At first Engels was embarrassed when I expressed interest in these works. He mentioned that Marx had also written poetry in his student years, but it could hardly interest anybody. . . Was not the fragment on Feuerbach which Engels considered the most meaty of the "old works" sufficient?' Which was more important, Engels asked, 'for him to spend the rest of his life publishing old manuscripts from the publicistic works of the 1840's or to set to work, when Book III of *Capital* came out, on the publication of Marx's manuscripts on the history of the theories of surplus value?' And for Engels the answer was obvious. Besides, said Engels, 'in order to penetrate into that "old story" one needed to have an interest in Hegel himself, which was not the case with anybody then, or to be exact, "neither with Kautsky nor with Bernstein".'[18]

In fact, except for *The Holy Family*,[19] a crazy-quilt bag of essays deriding Bruno Bauer and his two brothers, who with their friends constituted the 'holy family', none of the early philosophical writings of Marx was published either in his lifetime or that of Engels. Nor is it clear whether the major exegetes, Kautsky, Plekhanov, and Lenin, were ever aware of their content. None of the questions of alienation appears in their writing. The chief concern of the post-Marxist writers, when they dealt with philosophy, was simply to defend a materialist viewpoint against idealism.

THE contemporary 'rediscovery' of the idea of alienation in Marxist thought is due to Georg Lukacs, the Hungarian philosopher who did have an interest in Hegel. The idea of alienation, because of its natural affinity to romanticism, had already played an important role in German sociology, particularly in the thought of Georg Simmel, who had been a teacher of Lukacs. Simmel, writing about the 'anonymity' of modern man, first located the

[16] Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of German Classical Philosophy*, in Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 147.

[17] Engels to Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky, February 25, 1886, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Letters to Americans* (New York, 1953), p. 151.

[18] A. Voden, 'Talks with Engels,' in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow, undated), pp. 330-331.

[19] The first part of *The Holy Family*, subtitled the 'Critique of Critical Critique,' is devoted to an alleged misreading by Edgar Bauer of Proudhon's work on property. The book then jumps to a detailed analysis of Eugene Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris* and to the alleged misreading of this volume—which is about the sick and wretched of Paris—by a supporter of Bauer who had used the volume to demonstrate the 'critical method'. The last sections deal with the French Revolution and the Rise of French material ism. In his heavy-handed way, Marx was fond of pinning religious tags on his opponents. Not only are the Bauers called the 'holy family' but in *The German Ideology* Max Stirner is called 'Saint Max'. Although Marx drew most of his ideas from his peers—self-consciousness from Bauer, alienation from Feuerbach, communism from Moses Hess, the stages of property from Proudhon—he was not content simply to synthesize these ideas, but he had to attack, and usually viciously, all these individuals in the determined effort to appear wholly original.

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source of alienation in industrial society, which destroyed man's self-identity by 'dispersing' him into a cluster of separate roles. Later Simmel widened the concept to see alienation as an ineluctable outcome between man's creativity and the pressure of social institutions (not unlike Freud's later image of the inescapable tension between instinct and civilization).

Lukacs, coming to Marx after World War I, was able, without knowing of the early *Manuscripts*, to 'read back' from Marx into Hegel the alienation of labour as the self-alienation of Man from the Absolute Idea. The Kautsky-Lenin generation had construed Marxism as a scientific, non-moral, analysis of society. But in Lukacs' interpretation, Marx's economic analysis of society was turned inside out and became the work, as Morris Watnick put it, 'of a moral philosopher articulating the future of man's existence in the accents of a secular eschatology'. Lukacs' interpretation, which was included in a collection of essays entitled *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (History and Class Consciousness), published in 1923, smacked of idealism to the orthodox Marxists, and Lukacs quickly came under fire in Moscow. Among the Communists the book was proscribed, although the work continued to enjoy a *sub rosa* reputation among the Communist intelligentsia, less for its discussion of alienation, however, than for another essay which, in covert form, rationalized the elite position of, and the need for outward submission of, the Communist intellectual to the party. When Lukacs fled Germany in the early thirties and took refuge in the Soviet Union, he was forced, eleven years after the publication of the essays, again to repudiate his book, and this time in an abject act of self-abasement.[20]

When the early philosophical works of Marx were unearthed and published, Lukacs had the satisfaction of seeing how accurately he had been able to reconstruct the thought of the young Marx.[21] But this did not spare him from attack. The dogma, drawn from Lenin, had become fixed.

The early philosophical writings were published in 1932 in Germany. But in the floodtide of Hitlerism, of the destruction of the Social-Democratic and Communist parties, and the dispersal of the German scholarly community, there was little time or incentive to read these inchoate and fragmentary works. In the disillusionments with Stalinism in the late thirties, particularly following the Moscow trials, in some small intellectual radical circles in New York, in the increasing sense of rootlessness felt by a young generation, in the resumption of scholarly activity by a group of German scholars in New York, notably the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research of Max Horkheimer, and the publication of its *Zeitschrift*, first in German and then in English, there arose some small interest in the early writings of Marx, and particularly the idea of alienation. But the application of the idea was psychological and literary and soon found a louder resonance from surprisingly other sources.

The interest in the idea of alienation that unfolded rapidly in the late forties and early fifties came largely from the rediscovery of Kierkegaard and Kafka, and from the sense of despair that both epitomized.

Kierkegaard represented the other great, neglected trunk which had emerged from the deep

[20] This statement is quoted by Morris Watnick in his study, 'Georg Lukacs: An Intellectual Biography,' *Soviet Survey*, No. 24, p. 54. Mr. Watnick's extended discussion of Lukacs' ideas can be found in *Soviet Survey*, Nos. 23, 24, 25, 27 (1958-59).

Lukacs' book is generally unobtainable here. A chapter from it, under the title 'What is Orthodox Marxism', appeared in *The New International*, Summer, 1957. Sections of the book have been translated into French, in the review *Arguments* published by Les Editions de Minuit. There are some brief, but penetrating remarks on Lukacs—and the problem of the intellectual accepting the soldierly discipline of Communism—in Franz Borkenan's *World Communism* (New York, 1939), pp. 172-175.

[21] The early philosophical writings, principally the incomplete *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, and *The German Ideology* were first published (with small sections missing) in 1932 by S. Landshut and J. P Mayer under the title of *Der historiche Materialismus*. in two volumes. (Some small fragments of the third part of *The German Ideology*, on Max Stirner, had been published by Edward Bernstein in *Dokumente des Sozialismus*, in 1902-03.) A detailed description of the early manuscripts, particularly of *The German Ideology*, was published by D. Riazanov in Vol. I of the *Marx-Engels Archiv* in 1927. The complete texts are available in the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* under the direction of V. Adoratski (Berlin, 1932). A new edition of the early papers was published by S. Landshut in 1953, under the title of *Die Frühschriften von Karl Marx*. A complete guide to the works of Marx can be found in Maximilien Rubel, *Bibliographie des Oeuvres de Karl Marx* (Paris, 1956).

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Hegelian roots. Where the 'left-Hegelians' had sought a rational answer to the question of alienation, Kierkegaard argued that none existed. No rational act could overcome the subject-object dualism; any attempt to set rational limits to comprehension ends in the 'absurd'. Only by a 'leap of faith' could man establish a relationship with ultimate powers beyond himself. Thus, from ontology, Kierkegaard took the concept of alienation and gave it a religious content; and where Marx had sought to narrow the description of alienation into the exploitative social relationships created by the economic system, Kierkegaard universalized it as an ineluctable, pervasive condition of man.

There were deep reasons for this attraction to the idea of despair—and faith. The sadism of the Nazis, the ruthlessness of war, the existence of concentration camps, the use of terror, had called into question the deepest beliefs of the generation. One could argue, as did Sidney Hook, for example, that the Stalinist terror grew out of the specific historical circumstances which shaped the Russian dictatorship, and that its existence was no indictment of rationalism. But a more compelling reason—at least, psychologically speaking—seemed to come from the neo-orthodox arguments of Reinhold Niebuhr that such corruption of power was inevitable when men, in their pride, identified their own egos with the demiurge of History, and that rationalism, by encouraging utopian beliefs in man's perfectibility, had left men unarmed against the corruption which lurked in socialism.

From a second source, the 'tragic vein' of German sociology, came new, intellectual support for the idea of alienation. In the influence of Karl Mannheim, and later of Max Weber, the idea of alienation merged with the idea of 'bureaucratization'. The two had absorbed Marx's ideas and gone beyond him. The drift of all society, said Weber, was towards the creation of large-scale organization, hierarchically organized and centrally directed, in which the individual counted for naught. Marx's emphasis on the wage worker as being 'separated' from the means of production became, in Weber's perspective, as Gerth and Mills succinctly put it, 'merely one special case of a universal trend. The modern soldier is equally "separated" from the means of violence, the scientist from the means of enquiry and the civil servant from the means of administration.' And the irony, said Weber, is that, from one perspective, capitalism and socialism were simply two different faces of the same, inexorable trend.

Out of all this came the impact of the idea of alienation. The intellectual saw men becoming depersonalized, used as a 'thing' in the operation of society as a machine; the intellectual himself felt increasingly estranged from the society. The idea of alienation, thus, was a judgment *on* society. It also reflected the self-conscious position of the intellectual *in* the society.

THE themes of alienation, anomie, bureaucratization, depersonalization, privatization have been common coin in sociological literature for more than a decade and a half. In the light of all this, the recent attempts to proclaim the theme of alienation in the early Marx as a great new theoretical advance in the understanding of contemporary society is indeed strange. The reasons for this— which lie in the sociology of knowledge—are fairly simple. There is today a new political generation in England and France—and in the Communist countries of eastern Europe—whose only political perspective had been Marxism. Following the Khrushchev disclosures at the 20th Party congress and the events in Hungary, this generation became disillusioned about Stalinism. It wants to find its own footing, and, like any generation, has to find it in its own way and in its own language. The post-Stalinist radical generation in England and France still wants to think in political terms (and the dissidents and revisionists in eastern Germany and Poland, by the nature of their situation are forced to argue in philosophical categories)—hence the umbilical cords to Marx.[22]

[22] So eager are the young neo-Marxists to maintain a tie to Marxism or to provide some notion of fresh thinking and discovery that such a bright young Scottish philosopher as Alasdair MacIntyre is led to write such a farrago as appeared in *The Listener* of 8 January 1959, entitled 'Dr. Marx and Dr. Zhivago': 'Humanity and the one true bearer of the human essence in our time, the industrial proletariat, has to

(*continued on page* 31)

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But the difficulty is that there are no apocalyptic ideas or fresh ideological causes. There may be immediate issues such as nuclear tests or educational policy, but no comprehensive political vision which can fire young imaginations and fill the emotional void that obviously exists. The idea of alienation has gained a new edge because of the disorientation of the radical intellectual in the mass society where tradition, avant-garde, and middle-brow culture all jostle each other uneasily—but that is already a far different topic.

Having started out with the idea that in the young Marx there was a double vision of the nature of alienation, I would like to conclude with some brief remarks about the road that Marxism did not take. Marxist thought developed along one narrow road of economic conceptions of property and exploitation, while the other road, which might have led to new, humanistic concepts of work and labour, was left unexplored.

In the transmutation of the concept of alienation, a root insight was lost—that alienation is a consequence of the *organization* of work as well, and that in the effort to give a man a sense of meaning in his daily life, one must examine the work process itself. In manufacture, said Marx, the worker is 'deformed into a detail worker', he becomes an appendage to the machine. All this was laid at the door of capitalist society. Yet there is little evidence that the Communist countries have sought to reverse the process, to explore new combinations of work, to re-examine the engineering process, or to question the concept of efficiency that underlies the contemporary organization of work. If anything, in the intense pressure for production, the lack of free trade union movements and independent agencies, which can act as a control or check on the managers and the State, has meant that the workers in the Communist countries are even more exploited than those in western lands. Technology stands as a 'given'.

One need not accept the fatalism of the machine process[23]—or wait for new utopias in automation—to see that changes are possible. These range from such large-scale changes as genuine decentralization, which brings work to the workers rather than transporting large masses of workers to the work place, to the relatively minute but important changes in the pace of work, such as extending job cycles, job enlargement, allowing natural rhythms in work, etc. The 'flow of demand', to use the sociological jargon, must come from the worker rather than from the constraints imposed upon him. If one believes, for example, that the worker is not a commodity, then one should take the step of abolishing wage payment by the piece, or eliminating the distinction whereby one man gets paid a salary and another an hourly wage. If one accepts the heritage of the humanist tradition, then the work place itself, and not the market, must be the centre of determination of the organization of work. The fulness of life can and must be found in the nature of work itself.

break through and make new forms. So alienated man remakes and regains himself. This is the picture which the young Marx elaborated, the picture out of which the mature Marxist theory grew. In this picture there is a place for those members of bourgeois society who, humane and sensitive as they are, cling to the ideals and culture they know and therefore cannot make the transition to the new society. Such surely is Zhivago.'

[23] For an elaboration of this argument, see my essay 'Work and Its Discontents: The Cult of Efficiency in America' (Beacon Press, 1956).

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Reform or Revolution

THE CHOICE FOR THE ITALIAN LEFT

Giorgio Galli

THE twentieth congress of the CPSU and the events connected with it re-awakened in Italy the ideological debate between the various trends of opinion basing themselves on Marxism. Following a period of lively discussion and polemics, their respective standpoints may now be considered to be fairly well established, if less rigidly than was the case up to 1956. In order to understand the nature and details of this ideological process it is necessary first to consider in broad outline the general situation in that year. Since the various ideological standpoints were each of them related more or less directly to political movements, any attempt to identify the trends of opinion must inevitably include reference to those movements.

The various ideological standpoints defining themselves as Marxist can be classified as follows:

(i) The two great 'mass' parties, the Communist Party (PCI) and the Socialist Party (PSI), which described themselves by definition as Marxist-Leninist. They claimed to accept Marxism according to the interpretation given to it by Lenin. But the need to adapt Lenin's views to the conduct of political action over a long period under a democratic parliamentary regime (a situation in which Lenin had never been placed) inevitably gave rise to a whole series of adjustments and modifications of the Russian revolutionary's ideas; and consequently the theoretical basis of these parties acquired a confused and contradictory character. In addition to this there was the need to justify at all times the internal and foreign policy of the USSR, a constant preoccupation shared at that time both by the PCI and the PSI, which introduced further elements of ambiguity on the theoretical no less than on the political plane. According to this interpretation, the USSR was a socialist State at the head of the 'socialist camp' which was threatened by aggression on the part of Western, and particularly American, imperialism; and in order to carry out this aggressive policy in the international sphere, and to avoid internal difficulties, Western capitalism tended to move on to a more openly Fascist plane. Hence the need for the working-class movement to struggle, in the first place, to maintain peace, and secondly to defend democratic liberties whose banner—to quote Stalin's well-known phrase—the bourgeoisie had let fall.

(ii) The Social-Democratic party (PSDI), which also affirmed the primary need to defend democratic liberties—but which saw the main threat to those liberties in the PCI, a totalitarian party under the orders of a totalitarian State (the USSR), where not Socialism but a dictatorial regime of State capitalism reigned. In the PSDI's view, within the framework of parliamentary democracy, which acted as the bulwark against totalitarian threats, economic and social reforms should be carried out, with the aim of attracting to the democratic State the masses who were under the influence of the PCI and, even more, the PSI.

(iii) The small intermediary groups consisting of ex-Communists and ex-members of the two Socialist parties, who were critical alike of Stalinism and of traditional Social-Democracy (such as, for example the Unione Socialisti Indipendenti (USI)), or who drew their inspiration from a so-called 'liberal socialism' deriving from the pre-war clandestine anti-Fascist movement *Giustizia e Libertá* (for example, the Unitá Popolare (UP) group.[1]

(iv) The trends deriving from the left wing of the Third International, i.e. the Partito Comunista Internazionalista (Internationalist

[1] The USI organ was the weekly *Risorgimento Socialista*, the UP published the weekly *Nuova Republica*.

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Communist Party)[2] centred round Bordiga, a former first secretary of the PCI at its foundation, and the Revolutionary Communist Groups (Trotskyists) adhering to the Fourth International. These small groups, with no influence on the masses, criticised the Stalinist distortion and the abandonment by the Russian leaders of Leninist principles both on the internal and the international plane; the distinction between them lay in the fact that the former regarded the USSR as a regime of State capitalism, while the latter, following Trotsky's well-known analysis, considered it a 'degenerate working-class State' governed by a bureaucracy.

(v) The politically uninvolved or only marginally involved intellectuals, among whom an interesting group was that centring round the review *Ragionamenti*, linked to the French group of *Arguments*, which as early as 1955 foreshadowed the type of thinking which was later to be described as 'revisionist'.

In addition, within the framework of the larger parties there existed trends more or less openly critical of the official line. Thus, within the PCI, from the summer of 1954 onwards, there was the *Azione comunista* group, which from a left-wing standpoint criticised the leadership especially for its failure to exploit the revolutionary situation which, in the group's view, existed in Italy immediately after the war, and also for its parliamentary policy; their organ was the *Lettere ai compagni*, which circulated inside the party. Within the PSI, it was well known that certain influential personalities and intellectuals adopted an attitude of reserve, and that their ideas, whether from Leninist, Luxemburgist, or Marxist-gradualist influence, did not coincide with the party line. In the PSDI, criticism of the majority line (which favoured passive collaboration in the 'bourgeois' government) was particularly lively among the trend deriving its inspiration from *Critica Sociale*, the first Italian Socialist review, founded by Filippo Turati in 1891. This review had remained independent and still adhered to its line of democratic Marxism.

[2] Its organ is the fortnightly *Il programma comunista*.

WHAT was the reaction, from the ideological angle, of these various trends to the Soviet Communist Party's twentieth congress, the Poznan rebellion, and the events of October, 1956 in Poland and Hungary, and what new trends emerged as a result of these events?

Within the PCI, in the first instance, the official line was to stress Khrushchev's dictum that, in the new situation resulting from the 'victory of socialism' in a third of the world, it was possible for Communist parties in capitalist countries to gain power by democratic parliamentary means. This thesis, the opposite of Lenin's hypotheses in the period after the first World War, had been maintained by the PCI, and in particular by its secretary Togliatti, ever since 1944, and it was now reiterated afresh after a partial eclipse during the 'cold-war' years. On the one hand it was averred that the launching of the sixth Five-Year Plan provided further proof of the validity and efficiency of the Soviet system; on the other hand, the modification of one of Lenin's central ideas was seen as a consequence of the change in power relationships between socialism and capitalism at world level. Criticisms of the Stalinist period were represented as a process of internal correction within the system involving no ideological problems.

At the first meeting of the PCI Central Committee after the twentieth congress, Togliatti launched the slogan of the 'Italian way to socialism'—thus resuming once more his own original standpoint—in these words: 'New conditions have been created by the existence of the socialist camp and by the consequent modifications in the world structure and in relation to the struggle for socialism . . . what we are doing today would have been neither possible nor right thirty years ago—it would have been pure opportunism, as indeed at that time we said it was'. In support of this position, now presented as no longer opportunist because of the changed situation, Togliatti discovered its remote origins in the philosophy of Antonio Gramsci, a leading Italian Marxist who had directed the PCI from 1924 to 1926 and died in prison in 1937 during the Fascist dictatorship. Togliatti declared: 'The search for an Italian road towards socialism has been our

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constant preoccupation. I believe I can say that it was also a preoccupation with Antonio Gramsci, who in all his political action, and particularly in the last period of his life, was concerned to provide an Italian version of the lessons of the Russian revolution.'[3]

After Khrushchev's celebrated 'secret report' was made public at the beginning of June, Togliatti, after speaking of 'certain forms of degeneration' occurring in the USSR, arrived at the ideologically most advanced point to be reached within the framework of the communist movement with his famous assertion that communism was now becoming polycentric. This is what he said: 'The Soviet model cannot and must not any longer be obligatory . . . The whole complex of the system is becoming polycentric, and within the communist movement itself it is no longer possible to speak of a single guide . . . Out of the criticism of Stalin a general problem arises, common to the whole movement'.[4]

But while the Poznan rebellion was being suppressed, the Soviet leaders took up a position against revisionism with their resolution of 30 June, in which they directly criticised Togliatti for his attitude about the 'forms of degeneration', maintaining that 'There is no basis for raising such a question'. The PCI leader then published an editorial about the events in Poland under the title 'The presence of the enemy',[5] in which he swiftly returned to the accustomed thesis than the main cause for the disturbances in eastern Europe lay in the manoeuvres of imperialism. This was the line which the PCI ultimately adopted during the crisis of 1956: on the one hand stress was laid on the possibility of attaining power in the West by democratic and parliamentary means; on the other hand it was made clear that criticisms of Stalinism were not to bring into discussion the criteria for wielding power within the Soviet system. On the first point, precise affirmation is given in the theses for the eighth congress of the PCI (December, 1956), although an element of reserve remains in the statement that 'the "peaceful", painless development will depend on a complex network of conditions of which some depend on us, while others depend on the enemy's actions . . . We can never say that there is absolute certainty of a peaceful development'.[6]

WHILE outside events were moving rapidly, the 'centrist' position adopted by the party leadership favoured the development within the PCI of two different trends. The *Azione comunista* group began in June 1956 the publication of a fortnightly in which it criticised the parliamentary line adopted by the PCI from 1944 onwards. This group considered that the existence of the 'socialist camp' did not justify abandoning the Leninist thesis that the conquest of power can only come about by revolutionary means. At the same time, starting out from an examination of the origins of Stalinism, they modified their opinion concerning the socialist character of the Soviet system and, without defining it precisely, accepted the criticisms about its distortion advanced by the left wing. The events in Poland and Hungary accentuated this development, and the group, whose members were expelled from the PCI, showed an increasing tendency to resemble, from the ideological standpoint, the old left-wing opposition groups which quitted the Third International, rejecting alike the opportunism of communism in the West and the forms it had assumed in the East.[7]

[3] These quotations are taken from the PCI daily *Unità*, 15 March 1956. Gramsci's writings were published after the war and exerted a considerable influence in the intellectual as well as the political world. It should be borne in mind that his philosophy underwent various phases. Originally (1919-20) he attached great importance to the role of the factory councils, especially in Turin, seeing in them the possible Italian Soviets. Later, in 1920-21, he accepted the pre-eminent function of the party; and lastly (1924-26) he became concerned with the importance of an alliance between the industrial workers of the North and the impoverished peasants of Italy's backward South as a decisive element in an eventual Italian revolution. By emphasising one or other aspect of his philosophy it can be utilised to support theses which are sometimes divergent, as was in fact the case in the years under consideration.

[4] *L'Unità*, 17 June 1956.

[5] *L'Unità*, 3 July 1956.

[6] Togliatti in *Rinascita* (PCI monthly), July 1956.

[7] In 1957 the *Azione comunista* group merged with the small libertarian communist movement GAAP (*Gruppi anarchici di azione proletaria*—Anarchist Groups of Proletarian Action) which some years previously had detached itself from the anarchist movement FAI (*Federazione anarchica italiana*) and which published the monthly *L'Impulso*.

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At the same time a 'revisionist' opposition group developed within the PCI, which aimed at carrying to extreme lengths the new ideas about the utilisation of parliamentary democracy. This faction, which, given the structure of the PCI, did not succeed in becoming an organised trend, claimed that the leadership's passive acceptance of the theoretical bases and political implications of Stalinism had restricted the PCI's possibilities of action during the preceding decade, and that approval by the leadership of the dictatorial governments thrown up by the Soviet sytem, and even more of the repression exercised in Hungary, made it impossible for the party to present itself as a champion of those libertarian and democratic values which it claimed to accept.

This trend, which through its various groups fought first within and later outside the PCI, thus tended to adopt a position similar to the traditional outlook of gradualist Marxism, which regarded democratic freedoms as being limited by the economic structure of bourgeois society but nevertheless as a permanent acquisition of mankind, to be developed with the advent of socialism. Grafted on to this traditional standpoint was the influence of modern sociology, of neo-positivism, of Gramsci in his factory-council period, and of the idea of the 'leadership of the proletariat', in antithesis to the more rigid conception of dictatorship. Collaboration between this trend and the intellectuals gave rise to two reviews which afforded a clear expression of their attitudes: *Tempi Moderni*, edited by Fabrizio Onofri, a former member of the PCI Central Committee, and *Passato e Presente*, under the influence of Antonio Giolitti, a communist Deputy and former Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the time when the PCI participated in the Government, who is now a PSI Deputy.[8] Another group, led by Eugenio Reale, a former Senator and member of the PCI Directorate, produced the weekly *Corrispondenza socialista*, an organ of political struggle rather than ideological enquiry; the group, which took the name of 'Alleanza socialista', accepted the theoretical standpoint of the PSDI (described above) and in fact eventually joined that party.

REACTIONS to the events of 1956 outside the PCI were of even greater importance. In the PSDI, they were interpreted as the confirmation of the rightness of the party's views, for the PSDI had all along denounced the totalitarian and oppressive character of the Soviet regime. But in the party as a whole no effort was made either to analyse from a social and economic point of view the changes that were going on in the USSR, or to examine the problems raised by the new situation for European and in particular for Italian socialism. The left-wing trend alone, and especially *Critica Sociale*, while seizing the opportunity to stress the characteristics of its own brand of Marxism, sought to face questions which went beyond the immediate situation. Among what they regarded as the theoretical tasks of socialism were:

> An analysis of the nature of the regimes in the Russo-Chinese bloc, which may be represented either as the most advanced and 'concentrated' form of capitalism (transformed into State capitalism) or as a new economico-social form differing from both capitalism and socialism; the problem of the conquest of power, after historical experience has shown how the evolutionary method encounters limitations which appear insuperable, because the State incorporates certain social duties (e.g. the Welfare State) without modifying its class structure—while at the same time the revolutionary method has shown itself to be adapted only to promoting the industrialisation of backward countries, arousing them from the torpor of primitive social regimes and systems, but without then knowing how to embark on the road towards an authentic democratic and socialist development; the problem of wielding power in such ways that the abolition of capitalist society will not involve the destruction of political and civil liberties won by the liberal

[8] Onofri's theories, inspired by Gramsci, were outlined in the essay 'La via sovietica (leninista) alla conquista del potere e la via italiana, aperta da Gramsci' (The [Leninist] Soviet way to the conquest of power and the Italian way, opened up by Gramsci), in *Nuovi Argomenti*, No. 23-4, 1957. The main exposition of Giolitti's views is to be found in his book *Riforme o rivoluzione* (Turin, 1957).

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revolution and which have become the common heritage of the socialist movement.[9]

In the PSI, the events of 1956 brought about a re-examination of the party's whole ideological position. Nenni, the party secretary, stated clearly that 'as far as we are concerned . . . it must be recognised that a certain tendency towards historical justification which we used to apply to whatever we regarded as unjust or worthy of condemnation in the communist dictatorships has limited the critical appraisal of events . . . Even in the attack on the "shameful facts" denounced in K's secret report, there is an indication to the working class movement to place itself without reserve on the plane of the democratic and socialist struggle . . . engaging itself to the hilt in order that the changes which are necessary may come about within the framework of democracy and by consent.'[10] On the purely theoretical plane, Nenni, maintaining that criticism of Stalinism should go back to Leninism as well, tended to interpret the position of the PSI as a synthesis of various Marxist trends: 'Intuitively, the party had already solved some of the present-day problems thirty-six years ago . . . Then and later the party always harked back to the validity of the Marxist analysis of historical evolution in general and of the development of capitalism in particular, an analysis enriched by Lenin with the theory of imperialism . . . Though accepting the Marxist idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the party had freed it from the elements of terrorism inherent in the Bolshevik experiment . . . In this field Austro-Marxism, in substantial agreement with us, conducted between the wars studies which are still valid and which found expression in the Linz programme, one of the most concrete documents of socialist policy.'[11]

In effect, the PSI revised and brought up to date its formal Leninism (which, as we have said, was in practice contradicted by the party's post-war policy), and in relation to problems of the conquest and conduct of power it aligned itself with the views of the left wing of the Socialist International after the first World War. As to the definition of Soviet society, the party continued for the most part to define it as 'socialist' without going into details about the meaning accorded to that term. It was admitted that power was not exercised there in democratic forms even after the 'transition phase' of the dictatorship of the proletariat had come to an end—a fact which made it impossible for the system to be regarded as 'socialist' in the Marxist sense of the word. The adjective therefore only meant (as indeed was understood even by non-Marxist and non-socialist scholars and intellectuals) that private ownership of the principal means of production had been abolished and the economy was planned.

The new position of the PSI was confirmed by its estimate of the events in Poland and Hungary, which the party saw as authentic working-class and popular insurrections against police regimes where the policies adopted had created the situation which had led to rebellion.

ON the ideological plane it is also interesting to note that while in the matter of the conquest and conduct of power the whole party adopted the traditional standpoint of gradualist Marxism, a left-wing group in the party's monthly review *Mondo Operaio* took up once more the theme of the factory councils, of workers' control of factory management, and of socialism developing within the very heart of the capitalist centres of production. These themes were identical with the 'socialism of the workers councils' advocated in the period after the first World War (in Russia, Hungary, and Bavaria), and in English Guild Socialism, themes which in Italy had found their expression in the factory councils, especially in Turin, and in the first phase of Gramsci's philosophy, and which now once again became actual, since it was precisely the workers' councils, both in Warsaw and in Budapest, which were the centres of working-class action against the Stalinist regimes in Poland and Hungary.

Lastly, as far as the lesser groups are concerned, the new position of the PSI coincided pretty closely with those of the USI and the

[9] 'Tesi di Critica Sociale per l'unità e il rinnovamento socialista', (Theses of Critica Sociale for unity and Socialist revival), in *Critica Sociale*, 20 November 1958.

[10] *Avanti!*, 24 June 1956.

[11] *Avanti!*, 29 July 1956.

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UP, in that while on the one hand it criticised Stalinism, on the other it did not accept as completely valid the position of the European Social-Democratic parties. These groups therefore merged in the PSI, except for a minority of the USI which became absorbed in the PSDI.

By contrast, the Trotskyist and Internationalist Communist groups found in the events of 1956 the confirmation of the rightness of their own standpoint, and indeed they saw in them that alone. Thus, the Trotskyists laid stress on Khrushchev's criticisms of bureaucracy, and on the 'anti-bureaucratic' character of the Polish and Hungarian workers' claims, in order to reaffirm Trotsky's traditional view of the social structure of the USSR; while the International Communists placed the emphasis on Khrushchev's reforms in order to illustrate the increasingly capitalist characteristics (market economy, diminution of state ownership of the means of production) which these reforms were introducing into the social and economic structure of the USSR.

Thus during 1956-57 the ideological dispute centred on two main questions: the type of power existing in the USSR, and hence the whole significance of the Soviet experiment; and the possibility of evolution towards socialism in the West as it presented itself in consequence of a development of capitalism which appeared to involve the exclusion of revolutionary solutions.[12]

THE launching of the first Sputnik, a year after the events in Hungary, and the simultaneous period of economic recession in the USA and its subsequent repercussions in Europe, modified the terms of the debate. The PCI and the intellectuals who shared its theoretical standpoints found arguments—in Soviet space technology, in the new objectives of the Seven-Year Plan, and in Khrushchev's reforms in general—to substantiate their affirmation of the superiority of the USSR. After the demotion of the Malenkov group and of Zhukov, the struggle for power in Moscow seemed to be concluded, with a victory for Khrushchev; and this fact made it possible to present the first post-Stalin phase as a period of readjustment in which the foundations had been laid for fresh advances. At the same time, the recession in the West was presented as a proof of the permanent validity of the Marxist critique of capitalism; revisionist positions were identified with those of so-called 'neo-capitalism' (mass capitalism, popular capitalism, etc.) and were consequently discredited, on the one hand, as being foreign to the class movement, and on the other as being refuted by the facts (e.g. the recession). The strengthening of right-wing forces in Europe (de Gaulle's advent to power) was regarded as further proof that capitalism was running along its old anti-democratic lines of violence and authoritarian regimes.

The following quotations are typical of the interpretation of Marxism given by leaders and intellectuals of the PCI during the period in question:

'Once again the laws elaborated by Marx concerning capitalist economy have been proved valid. There is an excess of production in relation to capacity of consumption . . . The result is unbalance, violent ruptures, crises. Emergency measures can only mask and retard these phenomena; they cannot overcome or permanently conquer them.'

'History is no longer made by military cliques and joint-stock companies . . . It is the working class which is the protagonist of history . . . There is the Communist movement, which governs a third of the world, to set turning the wheel of history . . . There is a tendency on the part of large-scale capital to embark upon the road to Fascism, clerical totalitarianism, and war.'

'Against the convulsions of the capitalist world, generating wars, poverty, reaction, and violence, the action of the socialist world for peace and progress shows up in luminous contrast . . . the third Sputnik shows how far man can go when imperialism and the regime

[12] John Strachey's book *Contemporary Capitalism* (London, 1956) had a considerable influence in this direction; it was widely discussed especially in France. Cf. *Conquiste democratiche e capitalismo contemporaneo* (Milan, 1957), which includes essays by Strachey, Lange, Sauvy, J. Robinson, Bettelheim, Basso, etc.

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of exploitation are overthrown . . . The socialist world has history and reason on its side.'[13]

In a situation thus dramatically presented, the PCI nevertheless maintained that it was still possible to achieve power in the West by democratic methods: 'for a democratic government of the working classes' was the slogan launched by the PCI in its eighth congress and adopted in its electoral campaign of 1958, in which the call was for 'a vote for peace and unity'.[14]

It was this contrast between the apocalyptic and manichean character of its Leninist enunciations and the moderate and 'possibilist' nature of its estimates of the situation in Italy which prevented the PCI from exerting an ideological influence comparable to that of the pre-destalinisation period and from recovering the positions it had lost in 1956. The intellectuals refused to identify socialism with the USSR's advances in the space-race, and instead turned their attention towards problems of the structure of contemporary societies in the East, in the West, in the 'Third World'—such problems as bureaucracy, economic planning in a backward or an advanced society, the relationship of planning to the democratic conduct of power, the validity of the 'class' concept and its significance in the light of socio-economic and technological changes. In this way they strove to find for twentieth-century socialism a meaning independent of Soviet successes and prestige.

ON the more strictly political plane, the PSI at its Naples Congress in January 1959 consolidated its autonomy in relation to the PCI, already affirmed at the Venice Congress of February, 1957, when all formal alliance had been broken off. It thus offered a centre of attraction to the intellectuals and groups which had been thrown into ferment by the 1956 crisis and which did not wish to confine themselves to purely theoretical debate. It is significant that this power of attraction extended over a fairly wide range, running from the left wing of the PSDI, by tradition social-democratic, to that section of *Azione comunista* which was most sensitive to the claims of libertarian socialism. This was made possible by the fact that so-called 'democratic centralism', signifying ideological conformity, had been discarded in 1956, and consequently there was now more opportunity for the circulation of different ideas within the PSI.

From the purely ideological point of view, the various attitudes within the PSI differed chiefly according to the degree of emphasis attached to the questions considered above—namely, the guarantee of a democratic character in the conquest and conduct of power, and the view taken about forms of power existing in the Soviet bloc. Since no trend postulated as indispensable the violent conquest of power (Lenin), and none regarded the USSR as the 'leading State' (Stalin), distinctions were rather to be found among the more recondite ideological nuances. Thus, while the majority of the party reduced to a minimum any reference to the USSR and its role and emphasised the democratic guarantees provided by socialism, the trend favouring a close alliance with the Communists (their journal is *Mondo Nuovo*) expressed solidarity with the present leadership in the East, which it identified with power in the hands of the working class. An intermediary position, though nearer to the latter group, was to be found in the trend led by Lelio Basso, an intellectual who was formerly deputy party secretary and who has been particularly influenced by Lenin, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg. (They publish the monthly *Problemi del Socialismo*.)

The statements made in the motions presented by these three trends at the Naples Congress reflect these differences. On the subject of socialism's guarantees of democracy, the document of the majority trend laid down among its requirements 'a form of socialist state as an organization of mass democracy which eliminates class differences through the assumption by the workers of control of production and distribution; which realises in concrete fashion the democracy of the working masses, freed from exploitation and from all economic and spiritual subjection; and which assures at every rank and level direct popular

[13] *L'Unità*, 10 April 1958, 16 May 1958, 17 May 1958.

[14] Communiqué of the PCI Directorate, *L'Unità*, 17 May 1958.

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control over public powers and productive activity. . . . The choice of the democratic method as the way to socialism, not from motives of political opportunism, but as an organic necessity of socialist action, whether in carrying on the struggle for the conquest of power or in its exercise towards the end of building up the socialist society and state. . . . The absolute guarantee of fundamental civil liberties which, inasmuch as they ensure the dignity and full development of human personality, are part of the very substance of socialism'.[15]

The statements of the Basso trend and of the wing favouring close alliance with the PCI are much more synthetic. The former says: 'The PSI . . . renews the pledge . . . to operate on the basis of autonomy and class unity for the democratic way to socialism'; and the latter: 'Socialist autonomy is consistent . . . with the practice of social democracy in the course of the struggle itself and not only as a final goal'.

On the other hand, on the subject of the USSR and its role, it is the majority trend which is synthetic: 'The PSI does not identify itself with any position of States or blocs, but with the will of the workers of all countries to reconstitute in peace the unity of the world . . . The PSI stands side by side with all the peoples who are struggling against colonialism and imperialism.' The other two trends are more explicit. The Basso trend affirms: 'In the present historical period the advance of socialism is not bound up with the expansion of the Soviet bloc: it is the socialist forces in each country who must autonomously ensure, in a form suited to the particular situation, the advance towards socialism, within the framework of international solidarity, while the existence of the Soviet Union plays an immense part in the struggle against imperialism, especially in the sphere of the emancipation of colonial peoples'. And the wing favouring close collaboration with the PCI says: 'The socialists reaffirm, in contradistinction to the theory and practice of the leading-State, the revolutionary autonomy of the Italian working-class movement and the national ways to socialism. With this autonomy as its point of departure, solidarity is reaffirmed with the October Revolution, with the social organisation that has emerged from it, and with the countries in which the working class is in power: a solidarity within whose framework disagreements can be expressed and within which can be realised the continuing task of socialists to work towards prospects of renewal: a solidarity which naturally does not exclude the widest relations with the other working-class parties of the world'.

THE new phase of détente and the further Soviet successes in the space-race have not modified the PSI's ideological position. The party secretary recently emphasised, in speaking of the PSI's relations with the PCI, 'a fundamental divergence, which not long ago touched anguished depths, on the problems of the conquest and exercise of power, on the regimes within which individual liberty and the democratic life of the masses are organised and find their guarantee'. In this it may be possible to detect the influence of those trends of opinion mentioned earlier which are attempting to analyse on a sociological basis, going beyond ideological theories and categories, the socio-economic structures of the USA and the USSR and of the countries which to a greater or lesser extent are following their respective models.

Thus, after three years of far-flung debate, the positions of the different trends of Marxist opinion may today be considered to have become stabilised. By that I mean that the PCI and the intellectuals who move within its orbit are to all intents firmly fixed, if naturally with more elasticity and less dogmatism, in the views they held in 1955; but at the same time the PSI and the intellectuals linked with it, and the autonomous scholars of Marxist inspiration, have withdrawn themselves perceptibly, from the ideological point of view, from the influence of the 'Made in Russia' brand of Marxism, linked formerly with the myth and prestige of Stalin and today with the dynamism and prestige of Khrushchev.

[15] Stenographic report of the 33rd National Congress of the PSI (Milan, 1959), p. 405. The five quotations which follow are from pp. 417, 415, 409, 421, 415.

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NEO-MARXISM IN FRANCE

Jean Duvignaud

IT is not easy to pronounce upon the present course of revisionism in France without reference to the unfavourable conditions that France has presented for penetration by Marxism. This invites us to begin with a brief review of the past.

Although the working-class movement proclaimed itself, towards the end of the last century, as one of 'scientific Socialism', we cannot say that Marxism had been discussed and illustrated in France as it had been in central Europe during the same period. We might even speak of a *resistance* to it, by the 'intellectual class' that had been nourished for more than a century on liberal ideas, and then upon the utopianisms of the '48.

The hard core of this resistance was, no doubt, in University circles: although we could not, as in the case of Italy, speak of a 'dictatorship of idealism' (for no French philosopher, not even Bergson, imposed himself with such force as Croce), it must be allowed that the French University had elevated a subtle synthesis of Kant and Comte to dogmatic status. During the second third of the nineteenth century this synthesis became the ideology of the higher ranks of the administration and of philosophic teaching. The centralised and strongly bureaucratic University system as Napoleon had founded it, and as it had been consolidated by the attacks of its adversaries themselves. therefore had its own dogmatic—a dogmatic that excluded dialectics as well as materialism.

Moreover, one could say of Marx and Hegel what has so often been said lately with regard to Husserl or Freud or Max Weber—that the invasions of the great ideas, while they were spreading widely in central Europe, were repulsed in France by the chauvinism and traditionalism of official bodies, right up to the last war.

The infiltration of Hegel and Marx was clandestine: before the war of 1914, it took place in the privacy of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, around the personality of Lucien Herr.[1] Later, in the days of Surrealism, some young University philosophers in conflict with the Sorbonne tried to introduce the use of the 'revolutionary dialectic'. But neither Georges Politzer,[2] nor Paul Nizan,[3] nor, above all, Henri Lefèbvre (whom we shall find again among the contemporary 'revisionists') succeeded in this aggressive enterprise. We had to wait until the last war before Hegel and Marx received the 'freedom of the city' at the Sorbonne and in the University curricula. And it was doubtless by becoming 'authors among the rest' that they became contestable authorities—being now deprived of their mystery.

Another reason for the feeble impact of Marxism upon France lies in the relations that the 'intellectual class' maintains with the political class. Indeed, the French intelligentsia, although ever since the eighteenth century it has demanded a control over politics, has claimed to exercise supervision over the recruitment of the elites, and has sought to possess means of direct intervention in social and political life, has never seemed to be very particular about the choice of its representatives! One remembers how Diderot and Voltaire acclaimed Frederick II and Catherine II as

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[1] Lucien Herr belongs to that race of men who write little, but whose influence is greater than their works. One of his rare publications was the article that he wrote for the *Encyclopédie* upon Hegel, which long remained the only reference to that philosopher in France!

[2] Politzer, an *agrégé* in philosophy, was at first concerned to make certain German psychological researches known in France. Later, he was converted to militant Marxism, joined the CP and disowned his earlier 'illusions'. Denounced and arrested during the occupation, he was shot by the Nazis.

[3] Nizan was undoubtedly, with Sartre and Malraux, the most brilliant writer of his generation. A 'Normalien *agrégé* in philosophy, he wrote a pamphlet against Brunschwicg, his master at the Sorbonne—*Les Chiens de Garde*. His novel, *La Conspiration*, is one of the best descriptions of the situation before 1940. Having become a communist, he wrote the diplomatic page in *l'Humanité*; then revolted against the Soviet-German Pact, left the party, enlisted in the army, and disappeared during the siege of Dunkirk.

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'enlightened sovereigns', as mediators between Reason and the Peoples at the moment when those two rulers were behaving with vulgar rapacity. Such delegation of power to a man or a group regarded as the incarnation of Reason pretty clearly exemplifies the 'enlightened-ruler complex' that afflicts the intelligentsia of this country.

THUS, many of those who rallied to communism during the two great phases of the expansion of the party (the Popular Front and the Resistance) delegated to that organisation not only their rights of control over its power, but worse still, their own right to criticise. The creation of a political 'higher self', as it were, had the effect of weakening all independent reflection. Their philosophy thus became ideology, and their reflection mere justification of slogans or catchwords given out by the hierarchy. One might say that the French intelligentsia that rallied round the Communist party was returning both to the popery of the Catholics, implying obedience to a dogmatic imposed from abroad, and to the Cartesian intellectualism which despises all dialectics!

Twice over, this same mechanical reaction took place. First, at the advent of Surrealism, younger philosophers such as Nizan, Politzer, and Lefèbvre had no sooner entered into the party organisation than they almost immediately ceased to illustrate and expound Marxism as 'a universal and complete conception of the world'. And again, after the Liberation, their successors of a younger generation encountered the same resistances and yielded to them in the same way.

As for the other two categories of French 'Marxists' or 'Marxians', they are of no direct interest to us here. The first is of those who wanted to remain true to the principles of their youth, and did not join the Communist party. Adherents of various Trotskyist groups, they have produced work of quality and often of importance (such as that of Daniel Guérin on the French Revolution, and Pierre Naville's on Human Labour), but one could not expect them to 'revise' their system of thought. Secondly, there are those Catholics who have sought to expound the thought of Marx in the pastoral-social departments of their seminaries. Their works, such as those of Calvez or Bigot, are always fair and correct; and we cannot expect *them*, allergic as they are to the spirit of heresy, to understand how the Marxist system may be broken!

In view of these impediments to the development of Marxism in France, and of the belated acceptance of dialectical thinking, it is easy to see why Marxist revisionism should have been almost contemporary with the spread of Marxism itself! And it is a remarkable fact that the criticism of Marxism has, for the last ten years, provoked more passion and more philosophic activity than the defence of it.

Here we shall pay attention only to the revisionism proposed by sociologists and philosophers trained in Marxism who have at some time in their lives been members of the Communist party.

It will be necessary, then, to leave aside all that has been written by the adversaries of Marxism, or by the existentialist philosophers who, at the end of the war, were trying to combine dialectical materialism with phenomenology. Thus, the well-known works of Raymond Aron obviously anticipate contemporary revisionism, but they did not really attain their full meaning until the moment when younger men than he arrived by experience at ideas nearly approaching his own (a moment, too, when Aron moved towards the 'Left' in his opposition to the war in Algeria). Nor do the essays of Merleau-Ponty concern us here, since they take no account of the experimental reality of Marxism but put themselves upon a plane of pure ideas, applicable only to pure speculation about an 'ideal communism'.

Similarly, we shall not here make use of evidence supplied by novelists who broke with communism (such as Jean Cassou, Edith Thomas, Clara Malraux, J. F. Rolland), nor by poets (like Pierre Emmanuel or Francis Ponge) because they bear only upon the moral and aesthetic aspects of Stalinism, and our concern here is to see what it is that has raised the whole question of Marxism itself—and even of socialism—as a political vision.

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We shall therefore examine the ideas of those who, at the present day, are asking themselves, and trying to answer, these two questions:

(1) Is Marxism, in whatever form it is embodied, the best means of realising the socialist ideal?

(2) Is equalitarian socialism—a dream of the last century, contemporary with the beginnings of capitalism—still a reasonable ideal, or does it now belong to the museum of imaginary politics?

THE importance of French revisionism is undoubtedly due to this—that the communists found themselves in a situation analogous, in its way, to that of the intellectuals in a 'popular democracy'. The rude remarks that they made about the communist apparatus are analogous to those passed upon it by the men of the Petöfi circle in Hungary or of the review *Po Prostu* in Poland.

This, it is true, was their situation only in a moral sense: there were no police in France who compelled the communist intellectuals to live in the 'ideological ghetto' of the party. But everyone knows that the psychological and social solicitations that follow from the creation of the political 'super-ego' we mentioned just now can exert a mental tyranny symbolically comparable to police pressure. French Marxists knew that they were living in a democratic country, but they themselves were getting lost in a political prison, the bars and walls of which they were helping to construct. Thus we can say, without much risk of error, that most of the French revisionists' ideas correspond to the revisionist ideas in the popular democracies, since the intellectuals in this country too had, for some time, put themselves into a situation formally comparable to that which obtains over there.

But before examining these revisionist ideas, we ought surely to make the distinction that was drawn by Edgar Morin,[4] in a recent number of the review *Arguments*,[5] between *restricted* and *general* revisionism.

Restricted revisionism is concerned only with the external aspects of Marxism. It does not call into question the system of socialist ideas or the actual tissue of the 'revolutionary dialogue'. It admits, in general, that socialism will be 'regenerated' when it has swept away the ashes of Stalinism and of the military dictatorship.

General revisionism, on the other hand, demands quite a different effort and a more sustained application. It concedes nothing at all to utopianism, and endeavours to apply the Marxist criticism to Marxism itself, regardless of the immediate consequences that might ensue from such a total re-statement of the question.

The themes that we outline here certainly do not all imply their authors' acceptance of *general* revisionism (neither Mascolo[6] nor Lefèbvre would agree to so complete a revision of their values), but they enable us to follow the often complex proceedings of this critical movement, in which a great many writers and philosophers are engaged.

WHEN he went to Poland a little while after the events of October 1956, Dionys Mascolo found himself embarrassed among his foreign friends: the French intellectuals had been unable to hinder either the colonial war or the establishment of Stalinism. Petty cowardices, disavowals, capitulations, grotesque trivialities had reduced the French intellectuals, both of the right and the left, to the status of 'sympathisers' who ratify without protest the dismal fate allotted to them. Stalinism plays a special part in this degradation, for these

[4] Morin belongs to the generation now entering into its forties. Having become communist during the war, he took up the study of the forms of magic in contemporary civilisation. He was expelled from the CP, and applied his own methods to himself; it was then that he wrote *L'Autocritique*, in which he related his political experiences in order to analyse the magical forms they exemplified.

[5] *Arguments*, a review published by the Editions de Minuit, was founded by Edgar Morin and the writer of this article in 1957. It has published the majority of the revisionist texts, and has made known the thought of foreign philosophers in quest of a new political position. Today, this latter preoccupation tends to overshadow all the rest, in a review liberated from the Marxist 'taboos'.

[6] Mascolo is of the same generation as Morin. He joined the CP during the war, and was expelled about 1950. His *Polish Letter on the intellectual poverty in France* was published in 1957 by the Editions de Minuit.

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'officials appointed to the tasks of propaganda falsely called cultural' are betraying both the revolution and the authentic communism to which Mascolo refers.

To this 'corruption of the intellectuals' Edgar Morin returns in his *Autocritique*, and suggests a political explanation for it. In his sociological works, Morin has studied the survival, or the persistence, of magic in the consciousness of civilised, industrial man. Applying the same methods to his own adventures, he now discovers the *magical* nature of Stalinism, and indeed of Marxism too. Man in history, as he is pictured by Marx, is no longer the real man, but a phantom, and into this phantom the living man projects all his own resources of energy—to the point of losing himself in a logical but hysterical frenzy. Thinking then loses its meaning: Marxism has supplanted it!

In a recently published essay, *Le Marxisme en question*, Pierre Fougeyrollas[7] shows that the Marxist analysis is one of the great philosophies directed to the emancipation of man—but *only one* of those philosophies. To the classical Marxist theory of 'super-structures' ineluctably fastened to 'infra-structures' that determine them, Fougeyrollas opposes a more elastic conception of social dynamics, and tries to show that the 'models' or 'patterns' proposed by Marx do not correspond to permanent situations. Society is capable of infinite accommodations and variations, and the forms specified by Marx are only aspects of these. If, therefore, we want to understand something of the real history of our times, we had better repudiate the *fixed* patterns laid down by Marx, and measure the extent to which a still fluid society renders possible all kinds of relationships between classes and the means of production. Thus the privilege that is claimed for Marxism, as the regulator of all socialist or historical reflection, breaks down.

That privilege is contested also by Henri Lefèbvre[8] in *La Somme et le Reste*, but on the strictly philosophic plane. Comparing Marxism with other forms of thought that he had previously found seductive—such as Schelling's and that of Nietzsche—he comes to the conclusion that the materialist dialectic is *one of the possible reflections* upon Being and Becoming. One could even say, pursuing Lefèbvre's line of thought, that Marxism is like a symbol into which one reads everything that one desires. Immersed in the communist experience and subjected to the pressures of ideology and dogma, the philosopher thus transmutes the thought of Marx into a total system, able to replace all the others. In the end, Marxism becomes an 'all-purpose philosophy' and consequently good for nothing.

IN the course of several journeys through the popular democracies, I have personally had opportunity to see that the imposition of Marxism upon certain countries (such as Eastern Germany, for instance) causes a setback of several years in their development. By this I mean that the directorate of a few, which is constituted by the professional revolutionaries, having planted itself upon a country whose social forms are already well developed in conjunction with its industrial growth, is obliged to bring that country back again to the stage at which it was when Marx made his analysis of an earlier capitalism. If Marx is to be justified, everything seems to show that the social reality must be *magically* reduced to what it was at the time of the first railways—although at the same time certain technological sectors are being developed with the most modern means.

[7] Fougeyrollas, who also belongs to the generation of Morin and Mascolo, was condemned to death by the Nazis during the war, but became one of the liberators of Limoges. Professor of philosophy in Paris, he resigned from the CP at the time of the Hungarian affair; his *Marxisme en question* was published in 1959.

[8] Lefèbvre, who belongs to the generation born at the turn of the century, is the only French Marxist philosopher. In the early days of Surrealism, he tried to illustrate the conception of the Marxist world, and his works on *La Conscience mystifiée* (in collaboration with N. Gutermann) and *Le Matérialisme dialectique* have had an enormous influence. After becoming a communist, he exchanged philosophy for ideology, which he sought to apply to literary analysis, publishing books on Rabelais, Pascal and Musset. After expulsion from the CP he wrote a book dealing with the history of his thought, *La Somme et le Reste* and won the 'Prix des Critiques'.

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That there is such a divergence is the conclusion reached by François Fejto, in his analyses of the Popular Democracies.

Surveying the imposition of Stalinism upon Hungary and the other countries of Central Europe, Fejto shows that the forms of association imposed by dogma correspond in no way to the expansion of the human personality in a socialist environment. And if the institutions representing the transition to communism have not proved favourable to man it is not likely that the system they are leading to will be any more so. To think so is to forget that institutions, once set up, no longer obey their founders' intentions but have their own way of life; and that one is no longer allowed to mention reform, as soon as men have stopped talking of revolution.

To a lesser degree we find the same theme in the *Autocritique* of Morin, where the notion of the Party as the sole means of leading the masses to Socialism is subjected to a severe criticism. Examining the processes of bureaucratisation and 'cretinisation' in the Party apparatus, and trying to view this apparatus in the more general perspectives of one class, of an ideal collective, of one country, and of the divergent outlooks that constitute the warp and weft of social reality, Morin concludes that this organisation 'alienates' the working class and, in the end, cheats it of its own objectives.

THERE are two kinds of Marxist concepts—those that belong to the 'canon' of the doctrine (such as class, ideology, revolution, surplus-value, etc.), and those that come out of the 'vulgate', having been brought to light or invented by the Marxists of the end of the last century or the beginning of the present one (such as alienation, mystification, reification, etc.). If the former belong to a concrete analysis of the economic and sociological reality of the time of Marx, and are founded upon realities of the nineteenth century, the latter are only so many attempts to enrich the poverty of Marxism by adding to it. The work of Bernstein, Kautsky, Lukacs, Walther Benjamin, Korsch, Ernst Bloch, or even of Adorno or of Horkheimer, has always consisted in the creation of a phantasy of Marxism around Marx. The official hierarchy may occasionally complain about this phantasy; nevertheless, such a cloud of smoke is quite useful to it, serving as it does to drug the brains of certain philosophers.

Such 'Marxist' concepts as alienation and reification still have a certain success in France; for, following upon the works of Lefèbvre, such as *La Conscience mystifiée*, certain talented epigoni did, to a certain extent, embellish and illustrate them by means of a set of new terms borrowed from the dictionaries of the Austro-German universities. But these are not essential concepts: one can dispute them without thereby questioning the Marxist teaching itself.

Only a much more searching analysis can take the key concepts—those of class, ideology, revolution, surplus-value, or of the circulation of industrial capital—and subject them to examination. That is what Fougeyrollas attempts in *Le Marxisme en question*: the confusion of different meanings of the word 'class' brings him to recognise that we must either abandon this concept or, at least, reconsider its constituent elements. Has not modern industrial progress profoundly modified the social stratification in contemporary societies, bringing about the appearance of what is now called the 'tertiary sector'? Ought not the use of ideas of so little precision, which in their classical form are indeed out-of-date, be given up?

As for ideologies, Fougeyrollas argues that these are not simply reflections of the economic sub-structures. A closer analysis constrains the analyst to abandon concepts that have become meaningless. Even the concept of revolution itself is subjected to a stringent criticism, both by Fougeyrollas and by Lefèbvre. Not that either of them denies the effervescence and mobility of society, or the power of a group of men to break down the existing structures of a society by violence, in order to bring the great masses of humanity into a rational order. But both of them—and Lefèbvre especially—regard 'the Revolution' as an epiphytic myth, all too liable to dry up the thought of the individual investigator or philosopher. *La*

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Somme et le Reste is like an Odyssey, a tale of the distressing voyage of a consciousness unluckily caught between the Hegelian Charybdis of the 'absolute' Revolution and the Scylla of an opportunist ideology. If the Revolution still has a meaning, ought it not to be defined anew?[9]

If the fundamental Marxist concepts have thus to be revised in the light of contemporary economic realities and of modern industrial civilisation; if the whole of the ideology, all the forms of thought, both revolutionary and simply political, have to be broken up and replaced by new perspectives, does this not amount to saying that we had better have done with the formulas of Marxism? The social levelling is a fact; it is going on without the socialising ideologies which are invented to justify it. Economic progress is another fact: it makes nonsense of the philosophies of history, for it is being realised in America without the famous 'crises' which Marx thought inseparable from and essential to capitalism; and is being realised in the USSR in the teeth of those who did not *want* to build up a capitalist accumulation, but have done so all the same—by calling it 'socialist accumulation'! Clearly, then, every 'limited revisionism'—however little it may be true to its own logic or however deficient it may be in courage—can only lead to 'general revisionism'.

TWO successive numbers of the review *Arguments* (14 and 16) were devoted to such a radical revisionism. 'Everyone ought to confess to himself where he now stands', was the opening declaration of this collective examination of political and social values.

It was Kostas Axelos,[10] undoubtedly, who carried this logical enquiry the farthest, by drawing the ultimate conclusions which could not fail to follow from the criticisms that were formulated, and delimiting the scope of a general revisionism, presented, among other aspects of general revisionism, by the review *Arguments*, some more cautious (Colette Audry), others orientated more clearly in a social or political direction.

The dreams of the nineteenth century doubtless corresponded to the most elementary necessities of men, to the great hunger that had depressed human societies for thousands of years, separating them into classes in accordance with elemental requirements. And capitalism, in its creative phase, did not destroy these ancient forms, but even accentuated them. In its infancy, it was indeed that frightful monster of which Engels speaks for Great Britain, and that Marx analysed with genius in *Das Kapital*. That was all true enough, and if the proletarian revolution had broken out at that time, as Marx expected, it might have justified his hopes. But that time passed; and, more than the time, it was the growth of the economy and the pace of events that modified the ways of life and overturned the old structures of nineteenth-century social and economic capitalism. How could the dreams of men still be the same today as they were a hundred years ago, when the Parisian workers came out for the Commune? With the satisfaction of men's primary demands, which the West has appeased wherever it has imposed a liberal democracy, are not new needs arising—and new dreams? Or are we to go on vegetating in the utopias of the last century, and setting up idols in front of men who altogether repudiate them? The best service and the sincerest homage that we can render to the memory of Marx, is to deal with Marxism as he dealt with the systems of his age. That is, to challenge the social organisations set up in his name, realising that new dreams must be invented for a new world.

[9] It is in connection with the revaluation of this word 'revolution' that one should read the vivid and polemical analyses of Pierre Hervé in his books *La Révolution des Fétiches*, and *Dieu et Cézar, sont-ils communistes?* Hervé was expelled from the CP for having been a 'Khrushchevian' before Khrushchev had made his most celebrated speech. Here he examines the various illusions shared by most of the French communist leaders, and sheds a harsh critical light upon the prejudices and ready-made ideas entertained by the responsible ideologists of the Party.

[10] Axelos, after the revolution and civil war in Greece, in which he took part as a responsible communist, took refuge in France, and left the Party. He is one of the Editors of *Arguments*.

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In Search of a Synthesis

NEW REASONERS IN BRITAIN

G. L. Arnold

'HUNGARY and Suez' are commonly regarded as the crucial events in the formation of what is currently styled the 'New Left' in Britain. Certainly most of its adherents would subscribe to this view—notably those who until that date maintained an uneasy relationship of activity in, or cooperation with, the Communist Party. Yet some of the insurgent tendencies which came to a head in October-November 1956 had already been at work for some time. The crisis of that autumn—preceded some months earlier by the shock of Khrushchev's disclosures about Stalin—gave form to a movement which until that date possessed for its only identifiable political signature a generalised dislike of nuclear weapons and a demand for disarmament; and while 'Hungary' came to matter most to those who under the impulsion of this event left the CP, 'Suez' achieved similar status for left-wing elements in and around the Labour Party who had simultaneously become concerned over the emerging colour problem in Britain consequent upon the post-war arrival of West Indian immigrants.

One may say that all these topics have since coalesced to generate something like a unified attitude on the part of a left-wing intelligentsia for whom emancipation from Stalinism has somehow acquired an importance similar to—but not markedly greater than—concern over colonialism in Central Africa, or dislike of 'the Establishment'. The fact that these issues all tend to inhabit the same emotional plane, and to be debated with an approximately equal degree of seriousness, testifies to the truth—otherwise perceptible from the literary manifestations of the new school—that the entire 'movement' is still in the main confined to intellectuals. This, however, is the normal condition of a new political grouping in its early phase, and does not necessarily signify that one is witnessing a mere coffee-house revolt. In fact, the public response to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament suggests that at least one sector of the political 'front' has already been affected by the new stirrings: not surprisingly perhaps when one considers that the Campaign has received the blessings of Lord Russell, who for the rest can hardly be considered a suitable patron-saint of either neo-Marxism or neo-Existentialism. The New Left in fact has its traditionalist aspects: a circumstance which invests it with a certain charm for the beholder who recalls the similar enterprises of the 1930's.

So general a characterisation, however, misses at least one important element in this politico-intellectual ferment: the so-called 'new thinking' within the Labour Party provoked by the electoral defeat of 1955, and rendered more agonising by that of 1959. It was in response to the earlier of these setbacks that Mr. Gaitskell obtained the leadership of the Party with a programme of modernisation; and it was to satisfy the demand for a more streamlined version of Socialist thinking that Mr. Crosland in 1956 published the massive volume which has come to be regarded as the basic document of the Labour leadership's Keynesian faith.[1] It may seem strange to couple this bulky manifesto of Labour's New Right with the very different professions of the New Left; but the intellectual tension between neo-Fabianism and neo-Marxism is very much part of the background against which Socialist thinking in Britain currently seeks to define itself. If Mr. Gaitskell and his friends—notably Mr. Crosland and Mr. Douglas Jay—are Fabians who have moved so far towards Keynes as to be at times almost indistinguishable from the more advanced Liberals, the Left can be described as neo-Marxian in view of its continued insistence on the central importance of public ownership. And though adherence to public ownership as the criterion of a distinctively Socialist policy

[1] C. A. R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (London, 1956).

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can on occasions be combined with a sophisticated acceptance of modern industrial society,[2] it nonetheless implies a conception of socio-economic planning sharply divergent from the Keynesian faith in the efficacy of monetary management. It is the Left's insistence on ownership and/or control of the great monopolistic concentrations of power, together with its hostility to the entrenched managerial stratum, which sets its attitude off sharply from the Right's belief that modern capitalism is quite compatible with both democracy and the welfare state.[3] At present this quarrel appears to lack political relevance, in view of the Labour Party's evident inability to make even a moderate programme of reform palatable to a majority of the voters; but it is precisely this failure which has sharpened the conflict between the two schools and thus created something like a permanent tie-up between the political 'Left' within the Labour Party and the intellectual 'New Left' of the pacifist Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the anti-colonial movement. But for the struggle over socialisation, the not very original railing against 'the Establishment'—the cant term for the ruling stratum in its non-political, cultural and literary aspect—would long ago have died of its own triviality.

It is against the background of this debate that one must judge the relevance of Mr. John Strachey's ambitious attempt to reconcile Marxism and Keynesianism along the lines suggested in his two noteworthy studies, *Contemporary Capitalism* (1956) and *The End of Empire* (1959). Mr. Strachey can scarcely be called a neo-Marxist; it would perhaps be more accurate to describe him as an ex-Marxist who by a roundabout way has arrived at the traditional Fabian position of gradualism in practice and empiricism in theory: yet with the difference, that, having at one time absorbed a good deal of Marxian thinking (though mostly relating to economics), he has emerged as a neo-Fabian who uses Marx rather than Keynes as the starting point for his theorising. *Contemporary Capitalism* was an attempt to show in what respects economic reality and economic doctrine have moved away from the pattern traced by Marx; yet the mere fact that the book's critique centred on Marx rather than Keynes made it unpalatable to the majority of reviewers, while orthodox Marxists for their part deplored the author's failure to penetrate the inmost significance of Marx's theorising.[4] The political significance of this apparently doctrinal dispute lay in the fact that Mr. Strachey had attempted to outline what may be called a Social-Democratic position, midway between the Keynesian neo-Liberalism of the 'New Right' and the vestigial Leninism of the 'New Left'; a tendency even more marked in his second work, where the standard critique of Western colonialism is balanced by an appreciation of its historic achievements and a considered rebuttal of the familiar Leninist doctrine that Western living standards depend on the exploitation of backward countries.[5]. This balanced approach —natural enough to a writer with Mr. Strachey's personal experience of public affairs—does not come easily to the more strident ideologists of the New Left; but neither does his quiet acceptance of the end of British—if not Western—supremacy in world affairs appeal to the deeply ingrained 'imperial' outlook of his countrymen, whatever their party affiliation. It is a circumstance well known to candid observers of the British scene that the 'imperial' nostalgia is shared by all classes and is by no means the special preserve of either the ruling stratum or the Tory defenders of tradition. Yet the painful discovery of this fact at the time of Suez produced something like a traumatic shock on the Left: nowhere more so than among the London literary intelligentsia, which had naively attributed its own pacifist and isolationist outlook to the majority of its countrymen, and was appalled to find that such sentiments evoked only the barest echo from the average Labour Party supporter.

[2] Cf. Mr. Robin Marris, in *Socialist Commentary*, January 1960.

[3] Not that Mr. Crosland and his friends would claim a state of perfection under Conservative rule. On the contrary, they are quite aware that it implies a high degree of social stratification; but it is their belief that this problem can be solved without wholesale socialisation of the economy and the effective displacement of the present managerial stratum.

[4] Cf. Ronald L. Meek, 'Economics for the Age of Oligopoly', in *The New Reasoner*, Spring 1959, pp. 41 ff; cf. also Mr. Strachey's brief reply in the Autumn issue of the same periodical, pp. 107-8.

[5] *The End of Empire*, pp. 98 ff.

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WITH these observations we have insensibly crossed the frontier dividing politics from literature, and must now turn to that widely misunderstood phenomenon, the 'revolt against the Establishment'. For all its overtones of bohemianism, erotomania, and downright silliness, this has been very much part of the spiritual and emotional ambience of the New Left, ever since the now historic moment in May 1956 when Mr. John Osborne presented his play *Look Back in Anger* at the Royal Court Theatre. Among other literary manifestos reflecting the new radical mood, mention may briefly be made of the symposium entitled *Declaration*, published in October 1957 with contributions from a number of well known writers and critics; its rather more serious and reputable companion-volume *Conviction* (1958); Mr. Wayland Young's writings on nuclear radiation and allied subjects;[6] the noteworthy sociological studies of popular culture published by Mr. Richard Hoggart[7] and Mr. Raymond Williams[8]; and, in a lighter vein, the novels of Mr. Kingsley Amis and Miss Iris Murdoch, who as a philosopher also contributed a severely formal essay to the symposium entitled *Conviction*. Except that it has little direct topical relevance, Mr. Ernest Gellner's recent assault on linguistic philosophy in general, and the Oxford school in particular,[9] may be included in this list, notwithstanding the impeccably liberal and non-Marxist convictions of its author.

From this brief enumeration it will be seen that the New Left is far from being a uniform phenomenon; indeed where it broadens out into an attack on the *status quo* in the universities or in popular entertainment, its Existenialist tendencies are more in evidence than the neo-Marxian philosophy of its Socalist adherents. Nonetheless it is Socialism that gives coherence to the movement, while cultural 'modernism' may be said to be among the features it has in common with the more orthodox Liberalism of the 'old' Left.[10] Socially this division between the 'old' and the 'new' Left—apart from the inevitable hiatus produced by the war, and the obvious difference between the political line-up of the 1930's and the 1950's—appears to reflect the cleavage between dissident 'Establishment' intellectuals and the new post-war intelligentsia which has come up by way of scholarships and lacks some of the social graces (as well as the characteristic snobberies) of its predecessors. A sociology of this intelligentsia (of largely working-class and lower-middle-class background) would probably disclose that it prefers films to the theatre, American to French literature, modern to classical music, etc.; but it does not follow that these tastes are shared by all its more articulate spokesmen.

So far we have mostly dealt in generalities. It is time now to consider how far the tendencies under discussion are reflected in the two periodicals which since 1957 have served as the principal vehicles of the new trend, prior to their amalgamation late in 1959, when the *New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Review* combined to form the bi-monthly *New Left Review*, with an estimated circulation of 8-10,000, and a board of editors suggesting a careful balance of former Communists and traditional left-wing Socialists, with a slight numerical preponderance of the latter.[11]

THE first point to note is that the fusion concerned two groups whose antecedents differed not only with respect to politics and general outlook, but also age-wise, the *Universities and Left Review* (ULR) founders belonging to the post-war generation and being mostly

[6] Cf. *Encounter*, February 1957, November 1958. and the Penguin volume *Strategy for Survival* (1959). stressing the dangers of nuclear war.

[7] *The Uses of Literacy* (1957).

[8] *Culture and Society* (1958).

[9] *Words and Things* (1959).

[10] It is not quite clear where the *New Statesman* stands in this matter. Its politics have traditionally been Sovietophil rather than Socialist, while its cultural attitudes represents a curious amalgam of Bloomsbury and St. Germain-des-Prés; of late a certain infusion of 'New Left' ideology has been observable but it is too early to tell.

[11] This distinction takes no account of the public appeal on behalf of the *New Left Review* signed by a number of fairly eminent sponsors, including some well-known transatlantic names. These might be thought to constitute a rather more representative cross-section of both Liberal and Left-wing opinion, inside and outside the academic world, than the regular staff of the *Review* which exudes a somewhat sectarian flavour.

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in their late twenties, while the *New Reasoner* (NR) group were on an average several years older, and included some people with political experience going back to the 1930's. Having been closely linked to the Communist Party until the 1956 upheaval, NR tended to view political matters through Leninist spectacles even after the formal break with the CP, whereas the original ULR caucus at Oxford, which crystallised in the student excitement over Suez and Budapest, had no such ideological ballast to get rid of. There was the further important difference that the NR group was centred on Yorkshire, included some trade-unionists, and in general showed a different social composition, some of its intellectual spokesmen having a working-class background. It was thus doubly outside the 'Establishment', a circumstance which lent a specific ring to its radicalism and likewise made it more dangerous to the CP than the rather more traditional (in British terms) London-Oxford, middle-class and student, rebelliousness of the ULR. The latter group, while larger, more ebullient, and with better facilities for spreading its views among students in London and at the two ancient seats of learning[12], was politically inchoate, and to former Communists with some experience must have looked like a collection of youthful amateurs rather than a serious competitor. That in fact it turned out to be more successful in terms of public resonance (ULR's circulation steadily topped 8,000 almost from the first, while NR never got much above 2,500, including—it is claimed—some 250 in Eastern Europe), and able to hold its own ideologically as well, must be credited to the fact that some of its contributors had from the start struck a distinctive note, of which more later. Practically, the growing convergence of NR and ULR thinking, as reflected in the editorial policy of both journals, gradually established the preconditions of a fusion which was consummated at the end of 1959. If the offspring of this union, now styled the *New Left Review* (NLR), displayed a certain falling off in intellectual standards, the amateurishness inherited from ULR days probably had more to do with this than any sectarian narrowness which the new journal might be thought to have carried over from the past.

A glance at the composition of the editorial boards of these journals, before and after their fusion, discloses a family resemblance strong enough to outweigh the differences in origin already referred to. These must have seemed important at a time when the *New Reasoner* had not emerged from the caterpillary stage of an irregular stencilled discussion sheet (then still known as *The Reasoner*) circulated within the CP by dissident members of that organisation who had been shocked into heresy by the disclosures made at the XXth Congress of the CPSU. By the time ULR's first issue appeared on the news-stalls in the spring of 1957 (with contributions from Mr. Isaac Deutscher, M. Claude Bourdet, Professor G. D. H. Cole, and Mrs. Joan Robinson), the gap had already so far narrowed that not only Mr. E. P. Thompson, one of NR's two original editors, but even Mr. E. J. Hobsbawm—presumably a revisionist, but certainly not an open rebel against the CP leadership—felt able to contribute articles to the new venture. The distinction—one cannot speak of a division—between former Communists and left-wing Socialists was further narrowed when ULR began to carry Marxist analyses of the British economy, while NR gradually moved away from its overriding concern with the USSR and Eastern Europe to give more space to domestic developments; and it vanished altogether when both journals adopted virtually identical attitudes towards the Labour Party's conduct of the 1959 election campaign By then it was evident that the former Communists no longer regarded a 'reform' of the CP as possible, while the left-wing Socialists thought of the 'New Left' as a *movement* with a distinctive orientation, rather than a mere 'ginger group' within the Labour Party. Symbolically, the editorship of the combined journal was entrusted, by mutual consent, to a former ULR editor whose West Indian background, social origins, and quasi-Trotskyist pre-1956 affiliations, seemed to mark him out as

[12] ULR began in Oxford and thereafter spread to Cambridge, thus reversing a movement which in the 1930's turned Cambridge into the CP's most important recruiting centre among intellectuals. At present the London-Oxford axis would still seem to be predominant.

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the embodiment of all those tendencies—anti-colonial, intellectual, neo-Marxist—which the New Left might be supposed to incarnate.

THE *New Left Review*, whose first issue hit the news-stalls early in January 1960, thus presented itself as the distillation of a trend which had already found expression in its parent journals and in the two symposia, *Declaration* and *Conviction*, referred to earlier. Taking them together one may distinguish, broadly speaking, three distinct areas of interest common to the groups and individuals revolving around these various editorial platforms over the past three or four years: (1) World affairs, with special reference to nuclear disarmament and, latterly, racialism as something affecting Westerners in relation to other people; (2) Socialism and Labour politics in post-war Britain, with emphasis on the socio-cultural problems of industrial society in the age of full employment and the mass media; (3) Rethinking of Marxism in the light of post-Stalinist disillusionment with the USSR and its particular brand of 'socialism'. The last-named subject was perhaps of greater initial concern to the NR group, but the more original contributions have tended to come from writers associated with the ULR whose approach to Marxism may be described as Existentialist, in one case at least Christian-Existentialist.[13] This is an aspect of the New Left which links it with similar currents across the Channel, but it is only one tendency among several. If the entire group, as now constituted, were run through an intellectual spectroscope, the picture would refract into a number of distinctive shades, running from more or less orthodox Marxism-Leninism (mainly in economics), by way of 'third force' Socialist neutralism and pacifism, to something like Christian Existentialism in philosophy, as represented, with different degrees of emphasis, by Alasdair MacIntyre, Iris Murdoch, and Charles Taylor.[14] The same kind of 'spectrum analysis', when applied to the corresponding group around the Paris monthly *Arguments*, would disclose a similar result; and here too the political tie-up with the non-Communist Left (in this case the left-wing Socialist group associated with the weekly *France-Observateur*: the counterpart of the London weekly *Tribune*) has manifested itself in the somewhat excessive weight given to issues which happen to be of importance to Britain and France as ex-colonial powers: imperialism, racialism, pacifism. This is an aspect of the New Left of which its adherents tend to be unaware. It does not seem to occur to them, for example, that their relative indifference to the fate of people in Central and Eastern Europe, as against their almost obsessive concern with even quite minor happenings in Britain's and France's former African dependencies, reflects a kind of West European parochialism. The same might be said of the muted anti-American strain which occasionally affects their thinking, seemingly unconsciously and without awareness that the underlying sentiments are of a fairly traditional kind.

International affairs are the Achilles heel of the New Left. This was already evident from the *Conviction* symposium, where the two weakest and most pretentious essays were devoted to the subject. By contrast, economics and sociology are much more effectively represented. *Conviction* indeed was barren of economics, but included some noteworthy analyses of the Welfare State, and detailed excursions into popular culture by Hoggart and Williams. Like the contributors to this volume, the ULR group from the start showed a desire to link the sociology of capitalism with the critique of

[13] Cf. Charles Taylor, 'Alienation and Community' (ULR No. 5, Autumn 1958) and the same author's pamphlet *Is Marxism a Humanism?* The attitude reflected in these writings appears to have more in common with that of recent French and Polish discussions of Marxian philosophy than with the somewhat more traditional formulations of the NR group. For the latter cf. above all Mr. E. P. Thompson's essay 'Socialist Humanism' (NR, Summer 1957, pp. 105 ff.) and the same author's 'Socialism and the Intellectuals' (ULR, No. 1, Spring 1957).

[14] For the orthodox Marxist strain cf. in particular Mr. E. J. Hobsbawm's paper 'Dr. Marx and the Victorian Critics,' in NR, 1, and Mr. Ronald Meek's series of essays under the joint title 'Economics for the Age of Oligopoly', in NR, 8, 9, and 10.

Since NR began as a dissident Communist journal, it is not surprising that some of the early contributions—e.g. Professor Hyman Levy's 'Soviet Socialism' in No. 1—should have sounded the old ideological battlecries. The growing sophistication reflected in subsequent issues of NR doubtless helped to promote the eventual fusion with the ULR group.

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modern culture, and some of its more original efforts were directed to that end. Others, e.g. Mr. Michael Barrat-Brown's lengthy three-part study of the managerial organisation of British industry and banking,[15] or Mr. Ralph Samuel's essays on class society in Britain,[16] reflected the impact of transatlantic sociological thinking in general, and the example of Mr. C. Wright Mills in particular. A contributing motivation may have been supplied by the desire to underpin the conviction of the Labour left-wing that effective control over the British economy has remained oligarchical and needs to be radically democratised. This theme is not always clearly distinguished from the related subject of 'class' in the peculiar British sense of 'caste'. Indeed, a degree of confusion on this subject is probably endemic among all left-wing movements in Britain, though less so among writers whose Marxist training enables them to perceive the relevant distinction between 'class' as the embodiment of social control by a minority, and 'class' as the (more or less illusory) possession of conventional marks of social distinction. It is the latter, not the former, sense of the term which is commonly intended when it is said that the aim of Socialism is to establish a classless society. Nonetheless the two subjects are linked in the minds of most writers adhering to the New Left, and it is this fact which sets them off from the 'new thinkers' on Labour's right wing, for whom 'class' in the traditional, or Marxian, sense has little or no significance.[17]

TAKING all these themes together, and ignoring the differences arising from variations in personal and political background, the common ground occupied by the adherents of the New Left can perhaps be described somewhat as follows:

(1) World affairs since 1945—the *terminus a quo* for nearly all the writers adhering to the movement—are envisaged mainly in 'neutralist' or pacifist terms, as a competition between two rival blocs whose latent enmity threatens to bring about a global conflict fought with nuclear weapons. This is in conformity with Mr. Nehru's well-known views, and it is not surprising to find that his position is regarded with sympathy; but it also accords with at least some of the sentiments voiced in Lord Russell's (Bertrand Russell's) well-known *Open Letter* to President Eisenhower and Mr. Khrushchev in July 1957, and it is this strand of thinking which connects the New Left most closely with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The borderline between pacifist and neutralist thinking—e.g., the CND's demand that Britain leave NATO, which would appear to be a political rather than a moral issue—seems to be somewhat blurred here and there. Racial problems, now that colonialism is as good as dead, are mainly envisaged in terms common to Socialist and Liberal democrats all over the Western world. There is a marked reluctance to admit that working-class attitudes in this respect are not particularly 'progressive', and that middle-class Liberals—or even big business organisations—have been noticeably ahead of the 'common man' in working for racial equality.[18]

(2) The analysis of capitalism in general, and of British society in particular, has broken away both from Fabianism and from rigid Communist theorising, but has not yet attained a theoretical level commensurate with the declared aim of providing the Labour movement with an up-to-date Socialist doctrine. The general tendency is to make a rigid distinction between Soviet society—as being in some sense 'socialist', though not democratic—and Western

[15] 'The Controllers', ULR, Nos. 5, 6, and 7, subtitled 'A Research Document on the British Power Elite'.

[16] 'Class and Classlessness', ULR, No. 6, 'The Boss as Hero', ULR, No. 7, and 'The Deference Voter', NLR, No. 1. Cf. also Stuart Hall, 'A Sense of Classlessness', ULR, No. 5, and Norman Birnbaum, 'Social Constraints and Academic Freedom', *ibid.*

[17] The subject is too complicated to be dealt with here, and one can only say that the authors in question are evidently struggling with a post-Marxian formulation of what post-bourgeois society appears to be like.

[18] Mr. Ralph Samuel's article 'The Deference Voter' (NLR, No. 1), provides a partial exception, in that it alludes—though rather casually—to the strength of traditional racial prejudices among working-class voters, who on these and similar grounds supported the Conservative Party in the 1959 elections. But such candid admissions are rare. If the 'New Left' has yet grasped that 'Suez' lost the Labour Party hundreds of thousands of working-class votes, it has at any rate not said so in public.

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capitalism; this makes it excessively difficult to perceive that Western society has become 'post-bourgeois'. On the other hand, the factual analysis of Britain's 'mixed economy' is quite close to the realities.[19]

(3) There is considerable uncertainty over doctrinal foundations. Here, as noted before, the spectrum runs all the way from orthodox Marxism, via a kind of traditional Socialist militancy as reflected in Mr. E. P. Thompson's writings, to a species of Christian Socialism. It is noteworthy that the writings devoted to these topics are much superior, as regards their intellectual level, to the amateurish and sometimes positively jejune pronouncements made on 'ordinary' political or international matters. The same might be said of the more strictly 'literary' contributions, which are as good as anything published by the most exacting 'Establishment' organs.[20] This curious hiatus seems to reflect the somewhat accidental make-up of the inner circle, its overriding concern with matters of importance to intellectuals, and its comparative indifference to the boring trivia of public affairs. It would not be surprising to find the New Left giving birth to some quite genuinely novel and important ideas in the field of philosophy, whereas there are few signs so far that it is thinking hard about politics.

In terms of intellectual history, perhaps the most striking feature of the New Left is its (largely unconscious) dependence on French Existentialism, a dependence which goes hand in hand with a certain naive insularity.[21] The latter is clearly perceived as a danger in philosophy (cf. Iris Murdoch's essay in *Conviction*), but otherwise does not get much attention. The liberation from Stalinism—which was the fundamental experience of the ex-Communists in the group, and to some extent affected the entire New Left—has brought in its wake, along with more desirable and better advertised features, a certain tendency to relapse into 'Little Englandism'. This is, however, held in check by the obvious circumstance that Paris (though not New York) continues to exercise some intellectual fascination. East of the Rhine, Marxism now tends to be identified with the heresies of Georg Lukacs and Bertold Brecht (neither of them quite as heretical as the New Left is inclined to suppose). 'Socialist realism', for obvious reasons, makes no appeal to writers whose overriding concern with personal sincerity causes them to be on their guard against every species of officially sponsored make-believe.

The future of the New Left must obviously depend on the general development of the Socialist movement in Britain. Its current tie-up with the rebellious left wing of the Labour Party gives it a certain political resonance, but also increases the danger that political attitudes will become stereotyped. In contrast, the impressive intellectual level of its more strictly theoretical pronouncements suggests the possibility of something like a genuine break-through in the fields of philosophy, literary and art criticism, and possibly the sociology of modern industrial culture. At any rate it is in these fields that the neutral observer would expect the most significant advances to take place.

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[19] Cf. Brian Abel-Smith, 'Whose Welfare State?'. *Conviction*; and Peter Townsend, 'A Society for People', *ibid.* The bewilderment which seized hold of the Labour Party after 1955 is adequately portrayed in Norman Mackenzie's introductory essay to the volume, 'After the Stalemate'. Cf. also Ralph Milliband, 'The Sickness of Labourism', NLR, No. 1.

[20] If not better; cf. in particular the discussion on *Dr. Zhivago* (ULR, Nos. 5 and 6), and on the Polish film *Ashes and Diamonds* (ULR, No. 7).

[21] De Gaulle's coming in 1958 even provoked something like a chauvinistic outburst on the part of New Leftists. This has begun to look rather embarrassing now that Gaullism turns out to be distinctly more liberal in regard to Algeria and Africa than the previous democratic regime. The latter of course was more responsive to popular pressures and *for this reason* more obscurantist. This is the sort of thought which, if it ever penetrates the minds of the New Left's ideologues, may be expected to give considerable pain to some very estimable people.

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USA: RADICALS AT BAY

Lewis A. Coser

THE historian of American Marxist groups in the post-war period cannot but feel a certain kinship with those anthropologists who rush into the field because they fear that their tribe may soon become extinct. The American Marxist has become a rare species.

While the Marxist Left, outside of the Communist Party, never numbered more than a few thousand adherents, it yet showed in the thirties and early forties great intellectual fertility, a liveliness and zest for ideas, and vigour in theoretical analysis. Most of this disappeared in the late forties and the fifties. There have not been any intellectually exciting debates such as those in which men like Sidney Hook, James Burnham, Lewis Corey, Meyer Schapiro, Max Shachtman, Bertram D. Wolfe, and a host of other talented writers attempted to delineate a non-Stalinist Marxist theory; there have been no discussions which could measure up to the debates on the character of Russian society which took place inside and on the periphery of the Trotskyist movement.

By and large, whatever remains of Marxist thought is imitative and permeated by a strongly nostalgic view of the thirties. The bland fifties, with their temporary disappearance of major dramatic political issues and the prosperity which large strata of American society enjoy, have dried up the major sources of recruitment of the Marxist left, have severed it almost completely from the labour movement, and have drained off most of its intellectual vitality. The various Marxist groups which I shall discuss have all attempted in some way to come to terms with the realities of the fifties—but so far have met with indifferent success.

This survey might perhaps best begin with a discussion of the group of pro-Eastern Marxist intellectuals assembled around the magazine *Monthly Review*. Founded in the late forties by Paul M. Sweezy, the well-known economist, and Leo Huberman, a left-wing populariser, the magazine seems fairly representative of that trend of thought which has consistently stood for 'defence of the Soviet Union as a socialist country'. The programmatic statement in its first issue, which is reprinted from time to time, defines socialism as 'first, public ownership of the decisive sectors of the economy, and second, comprehensive planning of production for the benefit of the producers themselves'. Given this definition it is hardly surprising that the editors of the *Monthly Review* consider that 'Socialism became a reality with the introduction of the first five-year plan in Soviet Russia in 1928'.

The magazine has consistently adhered to this stand, even though it has also maintained that it does 'not accept the view that the USSR is above criticism simply because it is socialist'. On balance, materials devoted to the defence of the Soviet Union have been preponderant and criticism has appeared only here and there, usually in rather muted tones. Admiration for the Soviet Union was grounded chiefly on the pragmatic or pseudo-pragmatic argument that it 'worked'. Thus Paul Sweezy has written: 'It is the Soviet Union's military success in the war against Germany which more than anything else has convinced the world that socialism really works. This is a fact which historians of the future may well rank in importance with the October Revolution itself' (*Socialism*, 1949, p. 29). Sweezy and his co-thinkers recognised that there were, as they delicately put it, 're-strictions on liberty' in the Soviet Union, but they argued that 'the restrictions on liberty which are characteristic of Soviet Russia are far less symptomatic of the times than the crisis of liberty in the United States' (*ibid.* p. 261).

After the death of Stalin 'one of the greatest men of all times' (*Monthly Review*, IV, p. 449), and especially after Khrushchev's revelations to the XXth Congress of the CPSU, the tone of the *Monthly Review* became more critical. An editorial (October 1957) commenting upon Khrushchev's victory over his rivals makes the point that 'terror is an integral part of the

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system; it kept the other parts in balance; without it, the system is visibly beginning to fall apart', and it predicts that the drift of events in Russia points to the emergence of a military dictatorship which could be stopped only if the Communist Party took steps 'to democratize its own rule'. There has also appeared a number of rather sharply worded articles and comments on the Soviet Union in the last few years, although the November 1959 issue of the magazine reaffirms editorially that Khrushchev is 'a Marxist' and 'the leader of a socialist country'.

While the *Monthly Review* has in the last few years wavered in its attitude towards the Soviet Union, it has been almost unqualified in its enthusiasm for Mao's China. In its March 1959 issue, for example, it published an article by the Indian scientist D. D. Kosombi in which the communes were hailed as the beginning of the withering away of the state: 'Certain small but nevertheless important parts of the state machinery have vanished altogether. To that extent the *state machinery has begun to wither away*. Control over people has been replaced by the people's control over things. Though predicted by Marx and Engels, this is the first known example of the kind in actual practice. . . . The Chinese people have been the first to take the great step toward the real beginning in human history' (p. 246).

THE main reason why the contributors to the *Monthly Review* are so fascinated by 'socialist' developments abroad is their deep pessimism about the possibilities of socialism at home. This leads Paul Sweezy (*Monthly Review*, October 1958) to write about what he calls 'the great paradox of the modern world', namely that 'capitalism has so poisoned its immediate victims as to paralyze them, and at the same time it has awakened and set in motion the vast masses of the backward countries who are now the ones to bear undisguisedly the burdens of the irrationalities of capitalism' (p. 221). 'The advanced countries,' Sweezy continues, 'and especially the United States, have lost their chance to lead the way. They will be overtaken and surpassed economically by the centrally planned economies. . . . World leadership, for better or for worse, is on the point of passing out of the hands of Western white civilization and into those of a new Eastern and predominantly colored civilization. One can regret it, but I don't think I do. . . . As for us Americans, if the world survives at all, we will of course rejoin the procession sooner or later' (*ibid.* pp. 222-223).

The somewhat weary tone of this passage is characteristic of much of Paul Sweezy's more recent writings. One senses in them a pervasive alienation from American society, disgust with its values, premises, and assumptions, together with a fundamental disbelief in any hopeful socialist development on the American scene in the foreseeable future. Sweezy wrote in 1949 that to 'say that the Western European and American working classes have so far failed to fulfill the role of "grave diggers" of capitalism is not equivalent to asserting that they never will do so. Marx and Engels were certainly wrong in their timing, but we believe that their basic theory of capitalism and of the manner of its transformation into socialism remains valid and is no less applicable to Western Europe and America than to other parts of the world' (*The Present as History*, 1953, pp 26-27). But more recently Sweezy wrote that Marx had believed that the working class in the most advanced countries would bring about a socialist society but that 'Alas, he was wrong' (*Monthly Review*, October 1958, p. 221).

Hopelessness with respect to the possibility of working class socialist action is thus combined with a desperate clinging to the belief that the 'socialist countries' despite 'mistakes', 'corruptions', etc. still carry the socialist flag forward. *Monthly Review* represents a curious variant of Marxism in which belief in the working class has been replaced by what, for want of a better term, one might call a consistently Eastern orientation.

The *Monthly Review's* assessment of the American scene has been wavering over the years. During the McCarthy period and even after the McCarthy wave had receded, the dangers of impending fascism in America were painted, as might have been expected, in the most vivid colours. 'American political life is slowly but surely degenerating into a strange state, part anarchy and part fascism', ran an editorial as late as October 1954. In 1952

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Sweezy wrote that 'there is a very strong probability that the election of Eisenhower and Nixon would be the point of no-return on the road to fascism and World War III' (*Monthly Review*, vol. IV, p. 231). A month earlier an anonymous collaborator had stated that 'whatever the forms of its specific actions, the Big Business-military coalition in the United States assumes all the *functions* of a fascist regime. It undertakes all the basic assignments of fascist rule' (vol. IV, p. 189). A few months earlier still an editorial stated that 'anti-Communism in practice is nothing more nor less than the American form of fascism' (vol. IV, p. 70).

In more recent years the fascist perspective slowly disappeared from the pages of the review which, however, continued to characterise American society as dominated by monopoly capitalism. But, as distinct from a number of other Marxist publications, the *Monthly Review* did not indulge in periodic speculations about an impending fundamental crisis of the capitalist economy. Sweezy, who is a highly competent economist and whose *Theory of Capitalist Development* (1942) is one of the most lucid expositions of Marxist economics in any language, has been influenced by Keynesian thinking in a number of respects. He has therefore tended to reject theories of catastrophic breakdown, admitting that a certain degree of direction and planning of the economy is compatible with the maintenance of capitalist domination. His general prognosis for the economy has thus been based on the expectation of 'creeping stagnation,' a lack of expansion, a general dependence on military expenditure, and a gradual lagging behind the expansive forces of the 'socialist countries.' Such a perspective clearly fits in well with the general orientation sketched earlier. Not only the failure of the American working class but also the dominant trends in the American economy, as he perceives them, lead Sweezy to see no immediate possibilities for socialist action in America.

Peaceful coexistence, a peaceful competition between rival systems, but a competition which must inevitably reveal the superiority of the 'socialist' countries and the stagnation and decay of the West—this is the perspective that Sweezy and many, though not all, of his collaborators envisage. In the meantime all they can do is to hold the fort, and serve as a meeting ground for that saving remnant of pro-Eastern Marxists and semi-Marxists who read *Monthly Review* and the books it publishes.

While Sweezy represents the tired wing of the *Monthly Review*, Paul Baran, an economist teaching at Stanford University, represents its more aggressive and doctrinaire wing. Baran's *The Political Economy of Growth* (1957) is indicative of this. The main thesis of the book may be briefly summarised: monopoly capital, controlling the destinies of imperialist countries, leads to stagnation at home and is hostile to economic development in underdeveloped countries. The ruling classes in the United States and other imperialist countries are bitterly opposed to industrialisation of the colonial and semi-colonial world, where they back those strata who, for fear of losing their privileged positions, stand in the way of economic growth. Hence the main obstacle to growth in the underdeveloped countries is not a shortage of capital, but the squandering of the economic surplus by the parasitic upper classes combined with exploitation by the West. Therefore the only chance for the underdeveloped countries is to join the 'socialist world' which will give them economic assistance and will teach them how to operate the crash programmes of industrialisation which have been successfully applied in Russia, China, and the 'people's democracies'. The book is considerably less sophisticated than Sweezy's work and consists in the main of a repetition of the familiar arguments of 'Marxist-Leninist' propaganda.

In the *Monthly Review* for October and November 1958, Professor Baran's discussion of the 'Crisis of Marxism?' turned out to be a strained attempt to vindicate Marxist orthodoxy in the face of facts that seem hardly to fit into the scheme. This involved him in a startling if amusing set of contradictions. He affirmed that 'none of Marx's conclusions have been vitiated, let alone refuted, by subsequent events', only to state a little later that 'the proletariat in the advanced countries has not developed in the way Marx anticipated. Bad as its condition has been, it was able to rise above the "inescapable, unvarnishable, imperative" misery which was

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observed by Marx, and which he expected would be accentuated with the passage of time' Baran's position, though less modulated than that of Sweezy, does not really differ from his; the Western proletariat has missed the bus of history; Marxists in the West can only sit it out and wait till the triumphant growth of 'socialism' in the East finally vindicates them. Arthur K. Davis sums it up neatly in the November 1959 issue of *Monthly Review* (p. 262): 'Present indications suggest that the leadership of world civilization, held by Western nations during the last two or three centuries, is returning to the East—where indeed it has generally resided during most of history'.

THE American Trotskyist movement has been split into a number of groups and sects ever since its inception in the late twenties. It would serve no purpose here to enumerate the great many groups—often consisting of a mere handful of people—who at one time or another claimed to be the true representatives of pure Trotskyism in the United States.

The two main groups, since shortly before World War II, were the Socialist Workers Party, led by James P. Cannon, and the Workers Party (later Independent Socialist League), led by Max Shachtman. Cannon and Shachtman had been important figures in the early history of American Communism and in 1928 became the leaders of the Trotskyist movement. They parted company in the 'great debate' on the character of the Soviet Union in the late thirties and early forties. Cannon, backed by Leon Trotsky, maintained that Russia was still a 'degenerate workers state', a workers state because the means of production were socialised, but a workers state which had fallen into the clutches of a bureaucracy which had perverted its ends and subverted its means. Nevertheless, argued Cannon and his co-thinkers, following an analogy first advanced by Leon Trotsky, it is a state that must be defended by the international working class just as a trade union, even if it has for the time being a reformist or even counter-revolutionary leadership, is still a working class institution and must be defended against its enemies. This position led the Cannon group in due course to a defence of the Russian cause during the Finnish war and throughout the subsequent course of World War II. Subsequently they came quite logically to include the Russian satellites as well as China among the historically progressive though degenerated workers states—the only concession they made was to call them deformed rather than degenerate, since it would have been hard to explain what these states had degenerated *from*.

In more recent years there have been other splits in the orthodox Trotskyist movement, each group accusing the other of petty-bourgeois deformation and abandonment of the only true class line. But here again it would be tedious to follow developments in detail, although it is perhaps worthy of note that Cannon's Socialist Workers Party—pushing the pro-Soviet yet anti-Stalin orientation of Trotsky to conclusions which the latter might well have abhorred—has in recent years collaborated in a number of ways with the American Communist Party, even running common electoral tickets with communist fellow-travellers in New York. At a May Day meeting in that city representatives of the party which claims to represent the spirit of Trotsky shared a platform with representatives of the party of Trotsky's assassins.

The theoretical contributions of this official wing of American Trotskyism have been nil in the period under consideration. Bourbons of the left, they forgot nothing and learnt nothing Stale polemics in imitation of the style of Trotsky and Lenin alternate with standard analyses of the evils of American imperialism and monopoly capitalism and tedious reelings off of the beads of the Marxist rosary. The group is almost entirely divorced from the realities of American labour politics and is kept alive mainly by a combination of intellectual inertia and the fanatical devotion of its several hundred true believers. Its leader, James P. Cannon, now lives in semi-retirement in Los Angeles.

The history of the Shachtman wing of the Trotskyist movement is of considerably more interest. After the split with Cannon the Shachtman group counted among its members a number of first rate writers, among them Dwight Macdonald and James Burnham (James Farrell, the novelist, became a sympathiser for a few years somewhat later). Though many left the

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group shortly after its foundation, it still enjoyed the allegiance of a number of intellectually alert younger people who were willing to depart from the straight path of orthodoxy when the situation seemed to require it. Having once had the courage to stand up to the towering authority of Trotsky, the founding father, they never again completely lost the habit of independent thought. This is not to say that their theoretical contributions in the forties and fifties carried much weight.

During World War II, Shachtman's Workers Party took its stand on traditional left-wing socialist anti-war lines. It opposed the war aims of Russia and the West, denied that the war had a progressive character, and stood for a Third Camp opposed equally to the two warring camps. Though its spokesmen found it somewhat difficult to specify concretely who was meant to be in the Third Camp, the phrase was taken to mean a defence of the interests of the working classes and colonial nations. As to Russia, the Workers Party considered it a basically anti-socialist society, a 'bureaucratic collectivism' equally removed from capitalism and socialism, a new type of social formation which lacked all progressive features.

In the post-war years the Workers Party gradually began to question the Leninist form of party organisation, the 'vanguard theory', and a number of other basic tenets of orthodox Trotskyism. In particular it stressed the need for democracy both inside the party and in society at large.

As one follows the development of the Shachtman group one notices over the years the gradual muting of all the major elements of Trotskyism-Leninism in its programme and orientation while orthodoxy is often still verbally affirmed. Shachtman, writing on socialist policy in a hypothetical Third World War, rejected such slogans as 'revolutionary defeatism' or 'transform the imperialist war into a civil war', advocating instead that 'socialist policy must be based on the idea of transforming the imperialist war into a democratic war' (*The New International*, July-August 1951, p. 205). A master in the art of correct quotations, he quoted enough from Lenin to make this departure from Leninist orthodoxy palatable to the faithful, but when he explained that such a policy would provide for radical democratisation of social and political life though it would *not yet* be socialism, he had in fact travelled a long way from the Leninist orthodoxy of earlier days.

On the domestic scene the Workers Party—later the Independent Socialist League—considered the drift of the American economy towards a permanent war economy the outstanding post-war development. (See the articles by T. N. Vance in the six 1951 issues of the *New International*.) 'The dominant characteristic of the Permanent War Economy', wrote Vance, 'is that war output becomes a legitimate end purpose of economic activity'. The basic characteristics of the Permanent War Economy, according to Vance, are the permanence of the high level of war outlays, which have become a legitimate expression of growing state intervention in the economy, and the high rates of capital accumulation and of production accompanied by insignificant levels of unemployment.

According to this theory, it would seem that capitalism has acquired a new lease of life, that a permanent war economy is an effective counter-measure to the tendency towards breakdown of the capitalist economy so often predicted by Marxist economists. But Vance argued, not altogether convincingly, that it is not a 'normal' capitalist operation since it must lead, for example, to declining standards of living and irresistible inflation. Hence, 'the major battles of the class struggle will arise over the question of who shall pay for the increase in war outlays and which class shall bear the major burden of inflation'. The Permanent War Economy, Vance argued, far from offering hopes of solving mankind's problems, represented a 'further stage on the road to barbarism'.

WHILE the Shachtman group successively shed a good number of the old assumptions, it was still unable to discard the old orientations. Its followers had rejected belief in the progressive or socialist character of the Soviet Union; they had been led to recognise that economic trends in the United States, given the growing intervention of the state, could no longer be fitted into the classic Marxist framework; but they still advocated a political programme not basically at variance with the old

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model. Above all, they were not able to rid themselves of the belief in the inherently revolutionary character of the modern proletariat (*Cf.* Shachtman in *Labor Action*, 30 November 1953). The working class remained for them the very mainstay and centre of socialism, the class struggle a regulative idea from which they were not willing to depart. Having rejected the notion of the vanguard role of a revolutionary socialist organisation, emphasising as they did the need for a multi-party democracy, they now saw their role in the future as mainly that of a ginger group within a larger Labour Party. In fact, appeals for a Labour Party occurred with monotonous regularity in the publications of the group over the years. But the Labour Party which they so ardently desired has failed to appear. They cast envious glances at England, they hankered after a political situation in which they would become part of a larger movement as the militant, socialist, 'class struggle' wing, but no such movement has materialised. In the fifties their publications more and more came to exhibit a curious combination of nostalgia for the thirties, vicarious participation in British labour politics, and pious hopes for an American Labour Party of the future.

While the group around the *Monthly Review*, disappointed in the potentialities for revolution of the American working class, turned towards identification with the East, the Independent Socialist League, still maintaining its faith in the creative possibilities of the working class, in practice abandoned its Leninist theories and moved towards a position which became ever more indistinguishable from that of many 'reformists'. A resolution adopted in 1951 (*New International*, July-August 1951, p. 216) stated: 'The ISL declares that the program that it, as the socialist wing of the labor movement, puts forward for adoption by the labor movement, is not the rounded program for the socialist reorganization of society, but yet it is a program consistent with the fight to preserve and extend democracy and to protect the working class and its interests from the reactionary consequences of the permanent war economy and the war itself'. A modest aim indeed for a group which until a few years earlier had maintained its theoretical allegiance to Trotskyism.

The major activities of the ISL in the fifties consisted in a vigorous and consistent fight against Stalinism and for civil liberties. On both these counts it performed indeed an excellent educational task, not only for its own members but for wider circles. Yet it has become quite clear in the last few years that to perform such functions it was hardly necessary to maintain an independent organisation. In 1958 the ISL was dissolved and its remnants joined Norman Thomas' non-Marxist Socialist Party.

ONE of the perennial themes in the American Marxist movement has been the need for 'Americanization'. This may seem somewhat strange to the European reader—one can hardly imagine a parallel concern in the British socialist movement; but it becomes more understandable if one realises that Marxism in America was to a considerable degree anchored in immigrant groups existing in, but hardly a part of, American society. Appeals to 'Americanization' are a frequent theme in the early history of American socialism, and they recurred even in the communist movement. Here they often took the form of a theory of 'American exceptionalism'. The so-called Lovestone faction within the CPUSA claimed in the late twenties that Comintern statements about the decadence of world capitalism did not apply to America, that 'American capitalism is still on the upward grade, still in the ascendancy', and that it was therefore not even possible to speak of the stabilisation of capitalism in America. (*Cf.* Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party*, 1958, p. 165.) Given the exceptional conditions of American capitalism, they argued, the 'breakdown thesis' of the Comintern could not be applied mechanically in America and had to be modified in the light of American conditions; this heresy led, of course, to speedy expulsion.

The desire to Americanise their appeals, to take into account the exceptional circumstances of the American political and social scene, continued to be a main theme of discussion among Marxists of the forties and fifties. It led, for example, to the splitting off of a wing of the Trotskyists in 1953. This wing, under the leadership of Bert Cochran, proceeded to put out a magazine, *The American Socialist*

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Though it did not make any significant theoretical contributions, it did at least attempt to adopt a mode of presentation more in tune with the current American scene than the pseudo-Leninese characteristic of the orthodox Trotskyist press; but Cochran's effort failed like so many preceding ones. (His magazine has just suspended publication.)

A number of former members of the American Communist Party, for example the former foreign editor of the *Daily Worker*, Joseph Starobin (*Monthly Review*, September 1959), have recently also urged the need to attune Marxist analysis to the realities of American life.

PERHAPS a more interesting effort to rethink the relationship between Marxism and the American scene was made in 1958 by Earl Browder, the one-time secretary of the American Communist Party, who was expelled in 1945 for 'right-wing deviationism'. Browder published a little book, *Marx and America, A Study of the Doctrine of Impoverishment* (New York, 1958). It is chiefly concerned with a discussion of Marx's doctrine that capitalism, in its development, increases the impoverishment of the working class; that, although there might be temporary fluctuations, the working class in the long run would never achieve wages higher than the minimum that would just cover the cost of the labourer's existence and reproduction. Browder attempts to show that Marx was well aware that real wages in America were considerably higher than in England or on the continent, and contends that Marx tried to explain away this awkward fact by asserting that it was no more than a temporary phenomenon which would disappear when America had evolved a fully capitalist economic system. Browder then shows that Marx, in a report to the First International in 1865, abandoned his earlier subsistence-wage theory in favour of a quite different theory according to which the value of labour is not fixed but variable, and is powerfully influenced by concrete social conditions in particular countries and by traditional standards of life. This new theory, however, was not published till thirty years later; while it appears alongside the earlier subsistence theory in *Capital*, no attempt was made to harmonise the two, since Marx does not seem to have realised their incompatibility.

His Marxian exegesis serves Browder as a means to explain America's exceptional social circumstances. He contends that most socialist and all communist propaganda and activities in America have been based on the subsistence-wage theory and that the non-recognition of the special conditions of America, which allowed for higher wage rates and improved standards, condemned such propaganda to sterility. American labour could not accept a theory which so obviously contradicted the facts, and thus rejected all socialist and communist theories. This, of course, raises more questions than it answers. In particular, if one accepts Browder's contentions that, contrary to orthodox Marxian theory, highly developed capitalist countries have a higher wage level, it would seem more plausible and economical to conclude that the high development of American capitalism with its concomitant high level of wages was a key factor in the isolation of the American Marxist movements from the great majority of American workers. The point would then seem not that a specific theory was wrong, but that the very conditions of the American working class made it indifferent to anti-capitalist appeals. Be this as it may, Browder's book is one of the very rare instances of an attempt to reformulate the American experience within the framework of neo-Marxist theory.

THIS essay does not purport to give an account of all Marxist political groups in the United States. The interested reader will still be able to find in certain specialised bookstores and news-stands the publications of a variety of political sects which in one way or another lay claim to the Marxist heritage. There are still followers of de Leon, staunch defenders of the proposition that concern with immediate issues and concrete political problems distracts from the main task of socialists—which is simply to propagandise for Socialism. There are Western socialists, various Trotskyist splinter groups, and a variety of miscellaneous True Believers. But none of them, at least as far

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as this writer is concerned, can be said to have made any significant contribution to Marxist thought.

On the other hand there are of course a number of unaffiliated American radicals who can no longer be said to be, if they ever were, Marxists. In particular, the members of the American Socialist Party around Norman Thomas—surely the only major political figure that American socialism has produced since Eugene Debs—are by no means Marxist. Their advocacy of a mixed economy and their undogmatic approach to problems of contemporary socialism, make them more akin to the pragmatic non-Marxism of the British Labour Party or to the German SPD than to the tradition of Marxism.

Similarly the group of socialists and radicals, among them the present writer, who established and still publish the magazine *Dissent*, can hardly be said to constitute a Marxist tendency, though a few among them may still care to call themselves by that name. *Dissent* stated in its first issue (Winter 1954) that 'The accent of *Dissent* will be radical. Its tradition will be the tradition of democratic socialism. We shall try to reassert the libertarian values of the socialist ideal, and at the same time, to discuss freely and honestly what in the socialist tradition remains alive and what needs to be discarded and modified'. The magazine has become a gathering ground for non-sectarian, undogmatic radicals in America. It is perhaps a measure of its success that it would not be appropriate to discuss it in an article on Marxism in the United States.

Marxian modes of analysis, certain strands of Marxist doctrine and of Marxist method, have become an enduring component of American radicalism, as well as of American social science. But Marxism as a political party and as an orthodox doctrine is all but dead in the United States.

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DIVISIONS IN JAPANESE SOCIALISM

Edward Seidensticker

TWO rather obvious points must be made at the outset. One is that Japanese Socialism is changing. It is a highly unstable movement, ridden by factional and ideological differences, and what is true at the moment of writing may not be true at the moment of publication. At this moment, there are two parties that call themselves Socialist: the Socialist Party and the Democratic Socialist Party (Minshu Shakaito). The latter, which split off from the Socialist Party last October, is small enough to be coherent. It has announced a consistent and on the whole unambiguous platform, its morale seems to be good, and much of its future depends on how soon it can prove itself in elections. The Socialist Party, on the other hand, continues to work with a badly articulated programme from four years ago, and faces the prospect of more fights and possibly more defections.

The second point is still more obvious: that the Japanese Socialist movement is Japanese. Cliques and personalities are probably not as important as in conservative politics, but they are still important. A dispute that is ostensibly ideological, therefore, can also be a matter of old loyalties, old friendships and enmities, prewar battles that no longer have any meaning. The deepest ideological division today is on the question of whether the Socialist movement should be Marxist or not, but the factions bear a marked resemblance to those that emerged when a burning question was debated in the late thirties, whether or not the Socialists should support the Japanese war on the continent. The question that is most warmly debated today, on the other hand, went relatively unnoticed before the war, when almost the whole of the Socialist movement—insofar as it was a movement, a matter of parties and not of isolated scholars—was Marxist. The issues change, the factions remain. This is said not to suggest that issues are of no importance, but rather to give warning that they are not as all-important as they would be in a Western context. A number of people who accept the programme of the Democratic Socialist Party are reluctant to support the party itself because of the personality and past of its leader.

No more will be made of either point in this essay, which will attempt to describe Japanese Socialism as it is at the moment and has been in the recent past, and will be timid about predicting the future of that unstable movement; and, having cautioned the reader that cliques exist, it will have none of the dull business of deciding who belongs to which and why, and measuring the warmth of the hatreds and affections.

THE Socialist Party, organised late in 1945, got by at first with a platform that was little more than a slogan: the party would be democratic in politics, socialist in economics, pacifist in international affairs. People did, it is true, ask from time to time what this meant, but there was little open fighting until 1949, when a disastrous Socialist-Conservative coalition government, a huge bribery scandal, and an electoral setback forced the party to consider what it was and what it was doing. Was it a class party (*kaikyu seito*) or was it a 'popular party' (*kokumin seito*)? Was it a Marxist party, leading the proletariat to revolution, or was it a parliamentary party, prepared to accept the rules of the game, to advance and withdraw as its popular following rose and fell? A precarious compromise was reached: the Socialist Party was 'a mass party of a class nature' (*kaikyu-teki taishu seito*).

This compromise that pleased no one lasted until October 1951, when the party split. The occasion for the split was the San Francisco Treaty and its companion, the Japanese-American Security Treaty, which were signed that autumn and ratified the following spring. The disagreement was but one manifestation of the deeper disagreement over the nature of the

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party. The Marxists who believed in a class party were more reluctant to accept close treaty ties with the land of rampant capitalism than were the non-Marxist supporters of the mass or popular party. Conversely, the former insisted on a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, and the latter were prepared to let it wait awhile.

In October 1955, the party was reunited. More than a year earlier, the left wing (each wing of the split party had called itself the Socialist Party of Japan) had drawn up a platform announcing that it was a class party, but adding that the class it represented was now strong enough to make a 'peaceful revolution'. In preparation for the 1955 unity talks, the right wing replied with a draft platform which insisted upon parliamentary government as a matter of principle and not, as the left had implied, a matter of tactics. A disagreement is implicit throughout the two platforms on the question of whether the revolutionary process can be reversed by peaceful transfer of power.

They were somehow spliced together, and the reunited Socialist Party was once more what it had become in 1949, a 'mass party of a class nature'. Once more, the formula pleased no one. The right held its peace, believing, apparently, that it had done its best and that its waning power in party councils meant that amendment would, from its point of view, be amendment for the worse. The discontent of the left was more open.

Late in 1958, the fight began again. Professor Sakisaka Itsuro[1] of Kyushu University, an ideological leader of the left who had vociferously opposed the 1955 compromise, wrote an inflammatory article demanding that the party return to its Marxist origins. This, although Professor Sakisaka denied it, was a call for a new split. (He described it rather as a call for 'purification'.) Almost simultaneously, Mr Nishio Suehiro, who now heads the Democratic Socialist Party, and who also opposed the 1955 unification, was cleared of a bribery charge that had hung over him since the days of that disastrous coalition government. His acquittal meant the return to the Socialist Party of a most determined and effective believer in a mass or popular party. As in 1949, however, it was an electoral setback—indeed a series of them—that brought the real battle. Three successive elections in the late spring and early summer of 1959 demonstrated that the steady growth of the party since the reverses of a decade before had come to an abrupt end. It was time, once more, to consider what it was and what it was about.

Here is the controversial plank of the 1955 platform: 'The stipulations regarding the duties of our party make clear its nature and structure. From the standpoint of the attainment of a Socialist revolution by democratic and peaceful means, the Socialist Party of Japan must inevitably be a mass party of a class nature. In other words, our party is an amalgamation of all the working classes, organising a majority of the population, that majority being centred upon the labouring class and including farmers, fishermen, owners of medium and small commercial and manufacturing enterprises, and intellectuals'.

That this playing with words failed to solve the basic conflict is apparent from the rest of the document. The general nature of the Socialist revolution is made clear to some extent: there will be nationalisation of basic industries, but private ownership and freedom to choose an occupation will survive. From there on, however, an unrepaired split is evident. On the one hand it is stated that democratic processes in the Western sense of the term will be respected after the revolution—there will be secret elections and civil rights and the rest. On the other hand, these assurances are dropped into a Marxist setting far from friendly to them.

Thus we learn of the increasing impoverishment of the masses, the contradictions of monopoly capitalism, and the imperialistic adventures of Japanese monopoly capitalism, now the servant of American monopoly capitalism. We learn, at the end of the sequence, that 'world capitalism has already accomplished its historical mission. Now it must give way to the

[1] Throughout this paper the Japanese name order is followed, with the surname first.

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new Socialism, the result of a peaceful democratic revolution'. This note—the inevitable process of history and the 'historical mission' of the Socialist Party—is sounded more than once before we reach the end.

One feels that something has been left undone, something has gone unexplained. One comes upon a statement like this, for instance: 'Through proper acts of the Diet and the influence and organised strength of the democratic masses who support those acts, we shall take adequate measures against anyone who attempts by illegal means to obstruct or to impose limiting conditions upon the policies of our [Socialist] government'.

To a strong believer in Marxist theories of the historical process, this could become an invitation to one-party government. Anything that went against the natural laws of history would be an intolerable evil, 'illegal' to say the least; and, as in a People's Democracy, the 'organised strength of the democratic masses' could always be counted upon. The question can be stated rather simply: in spite of the assurances about civil rights and free elections, how can a conservative party which has been informed that its historical role is over hope to be allowed to come back once a 'peaceful revolution' has voted it out of power?

The point is not that there is no answer to the question, or that the contradiction is irreconcilable. It is rather that there is no attempt at an answer. On the one hand there is the 'class party' with its belief in the historical mission of the class, and on the other hand there is the 'mass party' with its regard for the rights of the masses, and each has its way. They were allowed to write alternate planks of the 1955 party platform, so to speak.

LATE in 1958 an organisation called the Society for the Strengthening of the Socialist Party made its appearance. Its members included important labour leaders and members of the Socialist left, and its ideological spokesman was Professor Sakisaka. In December his controversial article, 'A Correct Platform and a Correct Machinery', appeared in the monthly publication *Socialism*. There were moves afoot, he began, to reorganise the Socialist Party, but the root of the problem was not organisation but 'spirit'. Spirit could make do with an inadequate organisation, but no organisation, however well planned, could do anything without spirit. In a word, the Socialist Party had lost sight of its mission as a revolutionary party. It had not been united in 1955 at all, but rather spliced together, and the time had come for it to purge itself of discordant elements.

There had been a period, he continued, when a 'united front' was necessary and proper. That front had not had as its immediate aim revolution, but rather the building of the conditions under which a true revolutionary party could proceed to make a revolution. The conditions were now ripe. At home, the labour movement was strong, and abroad two things were happening: the anti-colonial movement was on the rise, and the 'Socialist nations' (by this was meant the Soviet bloc) of Europe and Asia were growing in strength. What was needed, therefore, was a revolutionary party, which the Socialist Party had not been since 1955.

'I argued then that the "unification" of the Left-wing and Right-wing Socialist Parties was a mistake, and I think now that it was a mistake . . . At a time like this, unsuited for a party of the united front, the reunited Socialist Party has a structure which makes it resemble such a party, and this fact has made its purification into the party of the Socialist revolution difficult, though not impossible . . . As was pointed out in the platform of the old Left-wing Socialist Party, the coming Socialist revolution in our country may be a peaceful revolution. We must not forget, however, that it will be a revolution. It will therefore be the climax of the class struggle. In other words, it will be the fight whereby the political forces guided by the working class will effect a complete seizure of power from the political forces presently in power, centred upon the monopolist bourgeoisie. A peaceful revolution does not mean revolution by consultation and accord . . . It is impossible to think of the fight by which power will finally and completely be taken from the ruling classes without thinking of a resort to some sort of force'.

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As if to follow up this denial of the idea that power could ever be returned to a 'bourgeois party', Sohyo, the largest of the Japanese labour federations and the principal organised support for the Socialist Party, issued a strongly worded statement on New Year's Day, 1959. It said in part: 'We are opposed to the theory of two large parties each making concessions to the other, and to the theory that the Socialist Party should be a popular, national party (*kokumin seito*) . . . The so-called theory of two large parties argues for the establishment of common ground with the conservatives by bringing the Socialist Party to the Right, and for the smooth transfer of power between the two. There is an extreme cleavage between the impoverished life of the labourers, farmers, small businessmen, and unemployed masses who are the base of the Socialist Party, however . . . and the capitalist class which is the base of the Liberal Democratic Party, and the two parties can therefore never find common ground'. In addition to this stand against the possibility of returning power to the bourgeoisie, the Sohyo statement contains expressions of disbelief in the notion of majority rule.

Meanwhile, in November 1958, Mr Nishio had been acquitted by the Tokyo Superior Court. When the Public Prosecutor's Office announced its intention not to appeal, he was free to return to politics. He lost no time. Beginning with the congratulatory dinner on the occasion of the acquittal, he pushed away at his idea of a popular party. That the heart of the Socialist Party should be the labouring class, he said, was but natural; but it could not hope to gain power without support from the middle classes. He also insisted upon the need to make the party's devotion to parliamentary government quite clear. It must state unequivocally that it would allow itself to be voted out of office. Finally, he was critical of the party's foreign policies, which he found too sanguine about Communist China and too critical of the United States.

ONE feels that the position of the Socialist Party in foreign affairs had in fact departed from the 1955 platform, which was a brave attempt at neutrality. It had more to say about American misbehaviour than about Soviet misbehaviour, to be sure, but to Japan the United States was a more conspicuous target. The fact that the Soviet bloc could also on occasion be a threat to world peace was duly recognised. By 1958, however, the foreign-policy pronouncements of the Socialist Party were indistinguishable from those of the Communists. It favoured a kind of disarmed 'neutrality' wholly to the advantage of the Sino-Soviet bloc. It favoured an immediate and, if necessary, unilateral termination of treaty relations with the United States, on grounds which ultimately came down to a belief that the presence of American troops in the Far East was a threat to a peace-loving China and therefore to peace in general. It held, on the other hand, that the Formosa question was not a proper one for international discussion at all, but rather a Chinese domestic affair.

If anything, matters became worse in 1959. In March, Mr Asanuma Inejiro, Secretary-General of the party, made a remarkable statement in the course of a visit to Peking: 'American imperialism is the common enemy of Japan and China'. In the 1959 elections, the Socialist Party was in the curious position of defending China against the Japanese government.

There are a number of explanations for the shift to the left in international affairs: the impossibility of making theoretical concessions to a restive Socialist Left, and therefore the need to make practical concessions; the difficulty of finding electoral issues, since conservatives in Japan, as in other places, have a way of taking over Socialist planks; and the influence of Sohyo, the big labour federation.

Whatever the explanation, Mr Nishio objected, and in effect called for a return to the foreign policy of 1955. Though neutrality was still the goal, it must be truly neutral—it must weaken neither of the two sides. Whereas the party was in favour of denouncing the Security Treaty with the United States, therefore, Mr Nishio was in favour of continued but loosened treaty relations.

The Left in its turn objected to his objections. Though not mentioned by name, he was singled out for special attack in the Sohyo New Year statement: 'Sohyo strongly supports

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the foreign policy of the Socialist Party, which does not recognise the existence of two Chinas and which, adhering firmly to neutrality, calls for annulling the Security Treaty . . . Within the party at the moment, however, there are splinter groups which, in defiance of its policies, call China an aggressor and publicly criticise the fight to annul the treaty'.

In January 1959, the chairman of the party, Mr Suzuki Mosaburo, made a statement which pleased the Nishio faction and surprised and angered the Left—surprise because Mr Suzuki, who was chairman of the Left-wing party before the 1955 unification, might have been expected to give the Left at least his tacit support. Instead he said that he saw no reason for revising the 1955 platform, and that he was disturbed by the tendency of the Left to belittle parliamentary processes and to emphasise 'the struggle outside the Diet'.

The Left nonetheless refrained from challenging Mr Suzuki to open battle. He has a way of making statements that offer comfort to the Left even when he seems to be drawing nearer the Right. Thus in the same month of January he made a strange declaration on the impossibility of 'playing see-saw' with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, a declaration which, though later softened, seemed to be consistent with the views of Sohyo and Professor Sakisaka on the impossibility of relinquishing power to the conservatives. It was easier and safer for the Left to go on attacking the unequivocal Mr Nishio than for it to open fire on the ambiguous Mr Suzuki.

Besides, elections were coming up, and the Socialists stood to gain nothing from open bickering. A semblance of unity was maintained through two sets of local elections in the spring and elections for the Upper House of the Diet in June. All three were disappointing to the Socialists, but the last had to be recognised as a defeat of the first order. It took place in circumstances unusually favourable to them: the prestige of the governing party had been shaken during the winter by a badly timed attempt to strengthen the police, and all of the unpredictable elements, the weather and the like, happened to favour the Socialist chances. Yet nothing came of the advantage. The Socialist percentage of the total vote fell sharply from the previous Diet elections, although as a projection of a ten-year trend it had been expected to rise; and the Socialists polled well over four million votes fewer than the Liberal Democrats in a total vote of less than twenty million.

The party leaders openly recognised the defeat, and the debate broke out again. Why had it happened, and what was to be done? Most of the July issue of *Socialist Party*, a monthly published by the party, was given over to a symposium on 'How to Break through the One-third Wall', the 'wall' in question being the electoral barrier that had stopped the Socialists at a bare third of the seats in the Diet. There were twenty-four participants, and, as anyone who had been following the affairs of the party could have predicted, their views on how to accomplish the break-through fell into two groups. On the one hand, the party need not fear being associated, in practice or in the minds of the electorate, with the Communists, but should rather fear losing its radical, revolutionary colour and coming to look like the Liberal Democrats; and, on the other hand, it was frightening away the floating vote by failing to distinguish itself from the Communists, and must try to win that vote from the Liberal Democrats by making it clear beyond a doubt that fears about its authoritarian tendencies were groundless.

IN the course of the summer, each of the numerous party factions came out with its programme for 'rebuilding the party'. As one moved from Left to Right, a willingness to work with the Communists gave way to open hostility towards them. Only the very far Left challenged the official formula, 'a mass party of a class nature', but one side felt that it should be more class than mass, the other that it should be more mass than class. In an attempt at compromise, the faction that had led the old Right-wing party suggested that each of the other factions subscribe to certain principles guaranteeing the continuation of democratic parliamentary government, and, having done so, call the party what it liked.

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The strangest statement came from the dominant Suzuki faction. It made a distinction between government 'under a Socialist system' and government 'under the Socialist Party'. Unless wholly meaningless, the distinction was enough to revive fears that the parliamentary system itself would be radically transformed 'under a Socialist system'.

In mid-September the party convention a crucial debate between Left and Right . A draft statement of current policy, drawn up the preceding month, had answered none of the deeper questions—indeed one felt that it had pounced with all fours on the Security Treaty as an excuse for avoiding those questions. It was aptly called 'a pretty exercise in rhetoric'. Nothing was done to allay misgivings about the extent to which the Socialist Party meant to respect the parliamentary system.

The September convention promptly became a crucial debate between Left and Right. A recess was called in the hope that something might be arranged to prevent an open split. Late in October it reconvened, but no solution had been found in the intervening weeks.

The specific issue was whether or not certain statements by Mr Nishio violated party discipline, and, if so, how he should be punished. He had publicly indicated doubts about the Socialist policy of opposing treaty relations with the United States when it was not entirely clear how Japan was to survive without such relations, and he had written an article for the hated Defence Agency[2] in which he said that the principal world conflict was not between socialism and capitalism but between totalitarianism and democracy.

Mr Nishio denied any intention of violating party doctrine, and was able to find persuasive support for his views in the party scriptures. It had become apparent that the Left meant to press the issue, however, and the Nishio faction boycotted the post-recess convention. Eventually it was decided that he should be reprimanded rather than expelled, but by that time the decision had no meaning. The Nishio faction had already bolted the party. At first calling itself the Socialist Club, it proclaimed itself the Democratic Socialist Party in January of this year. There have been a number of defectors from the parent Socialist Party since the October break, including the only Socialist who has been Prime Minister of Japan. The strength of the new party is now nearly a third that of the old in the Lower House of the Diet and about a quarter in the Upper. It does not, however, include the whole of the old Right-wing party. Although isolated and with every reason for being unhappy, the leaders of that party have chosen to remain with the Socialist Party.

The platform of the Democratic Socialist Party, made public in January, shows the influence of the new European Socialism. The word 'revolution' is not once used, a most revolutionary departure for a Socialist party in Japan. The mass nature of the party is emphasised, and its aims are described generally as the attainment of social justice and equal distribution of wealth and the protection of the individual from the machine and the organisation. Public ownership has been demoted to but one of the possible ways of achieving those ends. The most telling criticism of the new platform is that it fails to give the party an unmistakable character of its own, as different from the Liberal Democratic Party as it is from the old Socialist Party.

In foreign affairs, the new party agrees with the parent party that the ultimate goal should be neutrality, but cautions against any move—specifically, the immediate abrogation of the treaty with the United States—that would upset the balance between the two camps. It urges disarmament with complete inspection, but recognises the right of the Japanese to arm in their own defence until an accord has been reached on disarmament. China is 'one country with two governments'. Unlike the Socialist Party, the Democratic Socialist Party recognises that the Formosa question is of an international character.

In sum, the new party has discarded Marxism and proposes neutrality once the world

[2] Equivalent to a ministry. The Socialist Party opposes rearmament and considers the Defence Agency unconstitutional.

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has been made safe for neutrality. The Socialist Party continues to operate within the Marxist frame of 1955 and in matters of foreign policy has taken a position indistinguishable from that of the Communist Party. Some express fears lest, without a restraining Right, the party become yet more doctrinaire, 'the party of Sohyo'—for even the ambiguous Mr Suzuki stands to the Right of centre as the party goes now. Others hope that the moderation of the Democratic Socialist platform will make the Socialist Party chary of moving any farther to the Left, because to do so would be to risk losing votes to the new party. It is too early to say which of the two diagnoses is correct.

Much depends on what happens within the labour movement. Behind the Socialist split lies the split between Sohyo, with its stiffly Marxist leaders, and Zenro, the second of the two big labour federations. Zenro membership is between a quarter and a third that of Sohyo. It advocates moderate, non-doctrinaire, non-political trade unionism, and supported the Socialist Right before the split. It now supports the Democratic Socialist Party.

There are reasons for believing that, from Mr Nishio's point of view, the split might have been more effective had it come later, because it might then have brought a split in Sohyo, or at least serious defections. Sohyo is going through a difficult period. Almost all its member unions face crises, some because they are highly vulnerable to government retaliation for excesses in the past, some because they have trouble making their locals work in concert, some because Zenro-sponsored efforts to form 'second unions' or to 'renovate' established unions (to bore from within) are meeting with considerable success.

Recently Sohyo has shown signs of responding to the pressures. In January the faction now in control of the organisation issued a statement to the effect that in the future it would be political on some matters and non-political on others. What this piece of hedging seems to amount to is an admission that political unionism has come to an impasse, and that there must henceforth be more emphasis on economic problems. One is taken back to the days when, just before it fell to pieces, Sohyo's Communist-dominated predecessor was making similarly obscure statements. It would be unrealistic to predict the same fate for Sohyo itself. But what is happening could have much to do with the destinies of the two parties that divide Japanese Socialism.

That is all that can be said at the moment. This article must end as it began, with a refusal to make predictions about the future of a turbulent and unstable movement.

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THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Metamorphosis of an Idea

Heinz Schurer

IN the history of political ideas there are few that have been so pregnant with results as the theory of the permanent revolution, first tentatively suggested by the German-Russian socialist Parvus in 1905 and then elaborated in 1906 by Parvus' erstwhile disciple Trotsky. To the end of his life Trotsky would maintain that the events of 1917 in Russia had proved the theory right; recent students of the subject agree with him to the extent that the Bolshevik party when seizing power was inspired by conceptions first outlined by these two men.

The theory must be set against the mental climate in which it was born, marked particularly by the close interaction of German and Russian Marxism before 1914. The essence of the theory was a sensational suggestion which ran counter to all the models of the future then accepted by Marxist doctrine. It proposed that an economically under-developed country such as Russia might achieve the transition to socialism earlier than the economically advanced West. Was the idea merely a new, Marxist version of the old Slavophile and populist theme of the messianic mission of young, primitive, and healthy Russia showing the way to decadent Europe? On the contrary, the theory was the creation of the two most Westernised Russian Marxists who despised the 'intellectual kowtow before the Russian sheepskin'. Parvus, while of Russian origin, had made his name in German social-democracy as a champion of revolutionary Marxism against Bernstein's revisionist advocacy of a reformist policy making for democratic welfare capitalism.

The first distinct contribution Parvus made was his emphatic assertion of the imminence of the socialist revolution in the present age, not in some astronomically remote future. Passionately interested in the controversy between Marxism and revisionism then raging in Germany, Trotsky, then still in Russia, was deeply influenced by Parvus' attitude even before the turn of the century. With the German movement showing signs of losing some of its original fire, the idea gained ground that a stimulus might come to German socialism from Russia, a novel idea first put forward by the outstanding intellectual representative of German Marxism, Karl Kautsky. In 1902 he wrote that the centre of revolutionary activity might shift from Germany to Russia and the fresh breeze from the East might sweep away the philistine cobwebs which were beginning to enmesh the German party. After the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, on the first day of the fateful year of 1905, the defeat of Russia looming ahead, Parvus would express Kautsky's sentiments in more certain terms: 'The Russian Revolution will shake the world. The Russian proletariat may well become the vanguard of the international socialist movement'.

IT was in the second half of 1904 that Trotsky came to stay with Parvus in Münich. Both men had taken up an anti-Lenin line during the famous split in the Russian Social-Democratic Party (RSDLP) in 1903. The quarrel had shifted towards different interpretations of the role of the Marxist literati in the Russian labour movement. Against Lenin, his antagonists, Parvus, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg, supported by Kautsky, had emphasised the immense potentialities of spontaneous mass movements, contrasting the unorganised Russian working class, as the real hope of the future, with the emigré intelligentsia in Geneva everlastingly involved in hairsplitting theoretical squabbles.

Trotsky, then at loggerheads with both factions, had in his pocket the proofs of an unpublished pamphlet discussing the probable course of future events in Russia. He prophesied a political mass strike of the unorganised Russian

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workers as the opening chapter of the revolution. On 22 January, 1905, the day of the massacre in front of the Winter Palace, Trotsky's prophecy appeared to come true. Rosa Luxemburg summed up the significant clash between the traditional and the new: 'At the head of the procession ikons were carried, but over the heads of the crowds hovered the spirit of Karl Marx'. It was a classical statement of the belief of these Marxists that some Hegelian *Weltgeist* was working through the action of the masses. What happened next is best told in Trotsky's own words: 'The very next day after the bloody events in Petersburg, Parvus was overwhelmed with the thought of the exceptional role which the proletariat of backward Russia was called upon to play. Several days spent in Münich were filled with conversations which clarified a great deal to both of us and brought us personally close together. The preface Parvus then wrote to my pamphlet has entered permanently into the history of the Russian revolution'.

The conceptions put forward by Parvus thus arose out of the immediate impact of the independent action of the unorganised masses, masses not led by the RSDLP. This basic experience is an integral aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution. In the boldness of its perspectives, Parvus' preface went beyond anything that had hitherto been dreamed of by Russian Marxists. Contrasting the rise of the city in western Europe and the same process in Russia and China, Parvus showed that the spearhead of the French and German revolutions of the past, the mass of skilled urban craftsmen, did not exist in Russia. Their place in the historically inevitable struggle for democracy would be taken by the young Russian proletariat. The peasantry, on the other hand, being an amorphous social group, would never become an independent political force. Thus the future revolutionary provisional government would by necessity be a government of the workers' democracy. At this point Parvus made a sharp distinction between workers' democracy and the RSDLP; the RSDLP would have to choose between taking responsibility for the provisional government and staying aloof from the movement of the masses. The workers would regard this government as their own, whatever the attitude of the RSDLP. If the party were at the head of the revolutionary movement of the Russian proletariat, then this government would become a social-democratic government. 'Such a social-democratic provisional government, however, will not be able to establish socialism in Russia, but the very process of destroying the autocracy will provide a favourable terrain for further political effort.' Thus Parvus made it clear that in his opinion the work of Robespierre and St. Just would be carried out by a workers' democracy regardless of what attitude the squabbling RSDLP factions might take.

To assign such a tremendous role to the numerically small Russian urban working class appeared a staggering idea to his contemporaries. In April, 1905 Lenin dismissed the new concept as harebrained, arguing that a government established by the working class alone had far too narrow a social basis. To last any time at all it would have to be formed by an alliance of the proletariat with wide strata of the urban lower middle classes and the masses of the poorer peasants. Rosa Luxemburg, so closely allied to Parvus politically, in her first article on the events of 22 January, was much less bold. The Bolshevik faction was then holding its congress in London, and towards the end of his life Trotsky, looking back to those days, wrote: 'The negative aspect of the centripetal tendencies of Bolshevism first became apparent at this congress. The habits peculiar to a political machine were being formed in the underground work. The young revolutionary bureaucrat was already emerging as a type.'

WHEN Parvus and Trotsky met again it was in Petersburg in October, 1905, when the revolutionary wave was reaching its peak. In 1906 Trotsky was to write that the Russian working class had then displayed a strength that far surpassed the most sanguine expectations of the Russian social-democracy. Contrary to the laws of probability, it was the Mensheviks who thrived on the revolutionary atmosphere. Out of the mass strike an embryonic institutional form of Parvus' 'workers

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democracy' had been born, the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. It was a non-party organisation, and for that very reason, the first reaction of the Bolshevik faction had been to boycott it. Thus the clash between the emigré intelligentsia and the rank and file came to a head, as had been predicted by Parvus in January. In 1940 Trotsky wrote: 'The Menshevik faction predominated in the Soviets, the rank and file Mensheviks were carried away by the revolutionary developments; the leaders mused in perplexity over the sudden leftwards swing of their own faction. The Petersburg committee of the Bolsheviks was frightened at first by such an innovation as a non-party representation of the embattled masses'. Trotsky, who had been unable to fit into either of the emigré factions, was the one national figure belonging to the social democracy which the struggles of 1905 had produced. This contrast between his failure in the factional fight and his triumph in a spontaneous revolutionary movement was bound to colour his outlook.

It was in this atmosphere that Trotsky and Parvus developed their theory of the future of Russia in ever bolder terms. In their paper, *Nachalo*, in November, 1905 a line was advocated which went far beyond Parvus' preface of January. Their prognosis was based quite naturally on a further rise of the revolutionary temperature, on the prospect of risings in the countryside reinforcing the urban workers. Already a conflict had arisen between the employers and the workers in Petersburg, the workers had started enforcing the eight hours day, and the employers had answered with a lockout. In his essay on the Revolution, written in 1908, Cherevanin, a right-wing Menshevik, deplored the action of the workers, as by their precipitate move they had split the common front against the autocracy. Trotsky drew the opposite conclusion: the working class, having achieved democracy, would be forced to come into conflict with the employing classes, take over the factories, and run them on socialist lines. Since the urban working class would lead the struggle for democracy, the road to a permanent democratic order would only be established through proletarian dictatorship. However, that would be the task of an entire historical epoch, not an aim to be achieved overnight. Trotsky's telescoping of historical processes was completely at variance with the official party programme. The theory of the permanent revolution remained the idea of two outsiders. Of these Trotsky was the one to elaborate the concept in one of the most remarkable documents of twentieth century Marxism.

IN 1906, while in prison, Trotsky, building on the experiences of the past year, created his theoretical synthesis of the current doctrines of German left-wing Marxism and the lessons of 1905. He restated Parvus' thesis in great detail. Later he was to coin the term 'combined development' for the phenomenon of cultural borrowing by which the latest achievements of an advanced country are forced onto backward soil, making a Le Corbusier housing estate arise beside the nomad's tent. At one time he was to toy with the idea that Adlerian psychology, with its concept of the over-compensation of an inferiority complex, might provide an interesting parallel to the law of combined development. Out of the clash between old and new, intensified a hundred times by the violence of the contrast, would arise the powerful tensions in whose terms Trotsky viewed the Russian scene. At the beginning of 1905, under the impact of the events of 22 January, Parvus had suggested that the Russian working class by itself would be able to establish democracy in the country. From the clash between the Petersburg workers and the employers over the enforcement of the eight hours day at the end of the same year, Trotsky had drawn the far bolder conclusion that the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism would occur not as two distinct issues separated by an interval, perhaps of centuries, but, in ths conditions of a backward country, would be telescoped into one. In Russia, the democratic revolution when still only half completed would lead straightaway into the socialist revolution which would carry out the work of 1793. Democracy would be consolidated by socialism, not the other way round, and he underlined the need for the

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urban working class to make the utmost efforts to appear as a liberator to the rural masses, not as a new oppressor. Once the proletariat had gathered the peasantry behind the banner of the urban revolution, the army would inevitably go over to the victors.

In his essay Trotsky, having arrived at his conclusions from a consideration of the peculiar features of the Russian environment and from the experience of the first year of the Russian upheaval, set out to buttress his theory by extending its scope to the international sphere. The idea of such an East-West nexus had a respectable history. In 1855 Herzen had alluded to the King of Savoy's boast that Italy's reunification would be achieved by Italy alone, '*Italia farà da se*'. In a letter to Proudhon Herzen wrote: 'Russia, less haughty than Savoy, will not *farà da se;* she needs the solidarity and help of the peoples of Europe, but on the other hand freedom will not arrive in the West so long as Russia remains a soldier of the Tsar'. In 1905 there was a general expectation among Russian Marxists that the conflagration would spread from East to West, and in his forecast Trotsky tied the fate of Russia firmly to the fate of Europe, leaning heavily on the latest writings of Kautsky and Parvus. In 1904 Parvus, with his overpowering sense of the *Aktualität der Revolution* had said that international capitalism had turned into a closely interlocked system and thus not only the institution of private property, but the system of nation states had become fetters on further economic and cultural progress. The key to an unparalleled development of the productive forces was in the hands of the international working class, which would abolish private property and the nation state at the same time. Kautsky, too, had emphasised the general ripeness of Europe for a transition to socialism. From this Trotsky inferred that the Russian question could only be viewed as a reflection of the basic question of the age. The general problems of the advanced capitalist world would be most acutely posed in a backward country where social and political tensions were particularly strong. Without the support of a victorious socialist revolution in the advanced West, the Russian permanent revolution would be doomed. However, it was equally inevitable that the Russian permanent revolution would spark off a revolution in the West. At the end of his life Trotsky put his theory in a nutshell: 'The complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat leaning on the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat which would inevitably place on the order of the day not only democratic, but socialist tasks as well, would at the same time give a powerful impetus to the international socialist revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat in the West could protect Russia from bourgeois restoration and assure her the possibility of rounding off the establishment of socialism'.

Trotsky always thought that the countryside was to be ruled by the town, that the urban proletariat would give a lead to the peasantry. Once socialist measures were introduced in earnest, there would be an inevitable collision between the victorious working class and the rural masses. In isolation, the Russian proletariat were sure to be defeated in such a clash, unless the West European revolution came to its aid. 'The Russian socialist government will throw into the scales of the whole capitalist world the colossal weight given to it by the constellation of the Russian democratic revolution.'

WERE there any grounds for assuming such an impact of East on West? Again, Trotsky could draw on the experience of 1905, when there had been repercussions in Austria and Germany. It should be noted that, particularly in Germany, the excitement of the rank and file in the labour movement had greatly surpassed any determination on the part of the leaders; Bebel's recently published correspondence leaves no doubt that the leaders regarded their function as that of a brake. From contemporary sources the pattern of spontaneous mass movement and restraining party leadership emerges with equal clarity. This fitted only too well into the general framework of ideas created in Trotsky's mind by the Russian experience.

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It cannot be said that Trotsky was blind to the non-revolutionary aspects of German social-democracy. 'The European socialist parties—and in the first place the mightiest of them, the German—have developed their conservatism which grows stronger in proportion to the size of the masses affected, the efficiency of the organisation, and the party discipline. Therefore it is possible that the social democracy may become an obstacle in the path of any open clash between the workers and the bourgeoisie'.

However, this was no reason for pessimism. 'The tremendous influence of the Russian revolution is shown by the fact that it kills party routine, destroys party conservatism, and the open struggle between the proletariat and capitalism becomes the order of the day. The fight for universal suffrage in Austria and Germany has become more intense under the impact of the Russian October strike. The revolution in the East infects the Western proletariat with revolutionary idealism and arouses the desire to "speak Russian" to the class enemy'.

What impact did the Russian revolution in fact have on German social-democracy? No doubt the party had been pushed to the left. Hitherto the idea of the political mass strike, advocated fervently by Parvus for the last ten years, had found little sympathy in the party leadership. In 1905, fired by the Russia example, the party dropped its reluctance and accepted the idea. This fitted in well enough with Trotsky's conceptions. Yet at the time when Trotsky drafted his essay in 1906, the German party was beating a hasty retreat from this radical position under the pressure of the trade unions, which were horrified by the idea of a political mass strike. A man of Trotsky's cast of mind would not be dismayed by such a retreat. To him the great lesson of the tempestuous events of 1905 had been that the main force through which history was moving was the spontaneous action of the masses. Under its pressure, the warring factions, the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, had been brought together, forgetting the disputes of the exile period. Parvus wrote about the role of the party leaders, 'We were but strings of an aeolian harp on which the wind of the revolution was playing'. In his mind Trotsky drew a parallel between the Russia emigré *literati* and the German labour bureaucracy, both seen as potential obstacles in the path of history, and both inevitably to be pushed into the right direction by the pressure of events. The scorching lava of the 'embattled masses' would break through the crust of the German party's officialdom.

In 1930 Trotsky described his attitude towards the realignments within the RSDLP before 1917 as one inspired by revolutionary fatalism. In 1906 this philosophy, which after all went with a profound faith in the creative power of the masses and thus had a strong libertarian tinge, was expressed in the preface to the collection of essays in which the theory of the permanent revolution found its classical formulation. Trotsky went out of his way to emphasise that the permanent revolution would arise out of historic necessity. 'It is not an idea that we put forward as a premise to our tactics. The theory of the permanent revolution is a conclusion drawn from the interrelationships of the revolution. We would be most wretched subjectivists if our tactics were nothing but a practical application of this abstract idea'.

WHAT happened in 1917 in terms of the theory? It had been born out of a novel interpretation of the contrasting elements of the Russian political landscape. Only at a later stage had the theory been developed and placed in an international setting. In 1917 the approach came from the opposite end. Lenin, who had hitherto never had any time for the theory, not even for its refutation, had arrived at the conclusion that world revolution would emerge out of world war. From this general conception the application to Russia was but one short step. If the capitalist world at war was pictured as a chain exposed to intense stress, the weakest link would snap. The socialist revolution in Russia would only be a prelude to the socialist revolution elsewhere. After February 1917 Lenin accepted the bold perspectives of the permanent revolution for

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Russia which would throw the lighted torch into the powder barrel of Western Europe. The spontaneous revolt of the masses in Western Europe would sweep away the conservative influence of the social-democratic parties. Lenin's new conception constituted a complete break with the traditions of Bolshevism. When on his return to Russia in April 1917 he presented his new prognosis, it had the effect of a bombshell on the Bolshevik leaders who had stayed in Russia during the war.

On the other hand, as far as Russia was concerned, Trotsky now definitely broke with the philosophy of revolutionary fatalism which had inspired his warnings against the 'wretched subjectivist' pitfall of making his abstract theory the basis for the tactics of the RSDLP. On this issue he completely swung round. There was no more talk of the pressure of events bringing Bolsheviks and Mensheviks together, no more talk of the logic of history working through the spontaneous action of the masses. The revolution became a process in which two of the greatest revolutionary leaders of all time, at the head of a formidable party, forced a new predetermined political pattern on their country. Fifteen years later Trotsky was to say that in all probability there would have been no October revolution if Lenin had not arrived in Petrograd in April 1917. Such an interpretation, which is generally accepted, places the accent plainly on the leaders and the organisation. The idea which inspired the October rising was a combination of a brilliantly organised coup d'état in Russia with hopes for a spontaneous rise of the masses in the West. When persuading his fellow Bolsheviks to take the decisive plunge, Lenin made heavy play with the news of a mutiny in the German navy —a harbinger of even more formidable movements to come. In the moment of its apparent triumph the theory of the permanent revolution had been conquered by its surrender to a completely different conception. The basic premise on whose common acceptance Lenin and Trotsky had joined forces in 1917, their conviction of an imminent world revolution, proved unfounded. With its failure, as we can see now in retrospect, came Trotsky's eventual downfall.

Has the theory of the permanent revolution had its day? The answer would be no if the idea were reduced to some very general propositions such as that of the clash between the very old and the very new in the underdeveloped countries. The theory would still be relevant today if it was reduced to the suggestion that in conditions of a weakened traditional order a party of determined revolutionaries can seize political power, force a programme of industrialisation on a backward country, and create a proletariat from above. Yet by whittling it down to these points most of the essence of the theory would be lost. The movements in Asia and Africa today which suggest the topical relevance of the idea are primarily inspired by nationalism. Trotsky's theory, when fully developed, was based on the strongest possible sense of internationalism. It envisaged the closest co-operation between a socialist Germany and a socialist Russia; when Trotsky wrote that democracy would be achieved in Russia through the dictatorship of the proletariat he had meant it perfectly sincerely. He had believed in the self-expression of the masses by means of institutions created from below as opposed to the rule of a party. In the new versions of Marxism produced by the Asian revolutions of our time, there is great emphasis on the role of the rural masses; in Trotsky's system there was the sharpest differentiation between town and countryside, with all his hopes placed on the town, linking this element of backward Russia with the whole culture of Western Europe. The theory of the permanent revolution belongs to a historical epoch which has gone for ever, the period of the Second International. The realities of today are very far removed from the dreams of the young man of genius who drafted his twentieth century version of the *Communist Manifesto* in a Petersburg prison cell in 1906.

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Document: Polemics in Poland

THE PARTY AND THE TRUTH

We give below in translation extracts from two articles: the first, under the title 'Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth', by L. Kolakowski, appeared in Studia Filozoficzne (1959, 2), *and was an expanded version of a lecture given in the University of Tübingen in December* 1958. *Kolakowski is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Warsaw; the second article is a reply to the first, and was written by Adam Schaff, also a Professor of Philosophy in the University of Warsaw and a member of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party; it appeared in* Nowe Drogi (1959, 13) *under the title 'Studies of the Young Marx: Marginalia to Kolakowski's article'. Since the articles were too long to reproduce in full, we have given extracts, and where necessary summarised the passages not given in translation; these are printed in italics.*

I. Kolakowski

THE end of the 19th century gave birth to two different though as a rule not clearly distinguished theories which attempted to represent man's practical activity as one of the primary categories of epistemological reflection. One of them—which we may call Marxism with a positivist orientation, and which is expounded in the philosophical writings of Engels—appeals to the *success* of human action as the criterion by which it is possible and right to *verify* the knowledge taken to be true when any activity was initiated. The other, which found its classical though extremely careless and imprecise expression in the works of William James, introduces the concept of practical *utility* as an element in the *definition* of truth, understanding utility not as an instrument to establish a truth in human knowledge independent of man himself, but as that which itself *creates* truth. Truth therefore is relative, varying according to its application in everyday life.

Let me stress a few points which show the contradiction between the two doctrines. One of them treats truth as a relation between judgment or opinion and the reality to which they refer, a relation which is independent of the knowledge which man has of it. Man's practical activity most certainly does not create truth, but only determines its realisation.

The role of practical human activity as a criterion, as a method of verification, consists in the practical application of our knowledge in the hope of obtaining a specific result; success confirms the truth of our knowledge, failure compels us to abandon or modify it, but these procedures do not in the least affect the fact that a judgment is either false or true. If, for example, we are today uncertain whether there are rational beings living in the solar system elsewhere than on our planet, it is none the less certain that the statement: 'there are other rational beings besides those on earth' is, here and now, either true of false; for judgments have the property of being true or false independently of whether we know that property or are capable of proving its existence. From this point of view the classical definition of truth remains fully in force, taking into account that a statement is true or false in itself on the necessary and sufficient condition that the circumstances and processes are as it says in the reality which it is describing, and irrespective of whether anyone has succeeded or indeed ever will succeed in establishing this congruity by the criterion of practice or by any other. In this sense the relativity of knowledge can be accepted without difficulty; this concept is used with reference to the progress of human knowledge, inasmuch as human knowledge will never succeed in formulating scientific generalisations in a manner which precisely defines their validity or applicability.

This doctrine, universally accepted in Marxist circles, was popularised in Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*—but it was also generalised; for Lenin considered it possible to apply the doctrine not only to judgments, but also to sense impressions which, he said, 'copy', 'photograph', 'reflect,' etc., the objects of the

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external world. These expressions, it is true, were not favourably received by positivists; their content was too heavily charged with troublesome ambiguities. It seems to me, however, that with certain stipulations they can be accommodated, without detriment to Lenin's thought, within the framework of that classical definition of truth to which the Marxist tradition, since Engels, has appealed. It is obvious in any case that both authors mentioned understood the development of man's conceptual apparatus as an effort aimed at a continually more exact copying of the external world which is considered as a pre-existing model; that according to them human cognition, though incapable of absolutely and finally mastering its object, approaches it in a constant and progressive evolution, and that its unlimited improvement tends to make it more and more *like* reality; that it imitates more and more faithfully all the time the properties and relations of the world, which are themselves independent of this effort and exist in themselves outside human thought.

In the other theory mentioned, man's practical activity was raised to the level of an epistemological category in such a way that its functions are not confined to the verification of the congruity of human knowledge with a previously existing model, but are extended to the definition of the very concept of truth, falsehood, and nonsense.

Kolakowski notes that he is concerning himself here only with the central distinctive concept of Pragmatism in its first modern version.

In this version of Pragmatism—not the only one, as we know—the truth of a judgment is defined as a function of the practical advantage which its acceptance or rejection gives a man . . . According to this doctrine the truth or falsity of an assertion is made to depend on the individual and the sum of the needs which determine his aspirations at a given moment. To be true means to satisfy the criterion of utility. Truth is not a relation independent of its confirmation: it comes into being at the moment of its confirmation. This can be regarded as a variant of idealism, insofar as that doctrine holds no judgment is meaningful unless there is given a certain consciousness in relation to which the judgment is or is not valid.

In contrast to the theory described above as Marxism with a positivist orientation, the Pragmatist concept can obviously not be reconciled with the classical definition of truth. According to the first theory human cognition, limited as it is in its main lines by man's biological and social needs, nonetheless strives in a gradual and infinite approximation towards an absolute copy of a reality existing beforehand and always primary in relation to cognition, although subject to changes; cognition is equally a means of satisfying human needs and at the same time an instrument which allows us to describe the world as it is 'in itself'. According to the other doctrine, cognition is a form of biological reaction facilitating the optimum adaptation of particular organisms to their medium. The classical Pragmatist conception of cognition is in reality purely biological; you can say meaningfully that the reaction of an organism to the stimuli of its medium is or is not adequate, that is to say useful or harmful for the preservation of the organism. Such evaluations are applied also to cognition; it can be qualified from the same point of view and assessed as true or false according to its results. But to ask whether a judgment is true or false in the ordinary sense, i.e., whether its content corresponds to the world 'in itself', would be as fruitless an operation as to ask whether a patellar reflex is true or false. It is not known what 'resemblance' between the content of cognition and objects is supposed to mean. But it is easy to understand the question whether the sum of biological reactions called cognition effectively helps the organism to orient itself in its medium, whether it satisfies the needs or instincts of the organism . . .

Kolakowski describes Engels' doctrine as a manifestation of typically 19th century optimistic scientism, and early Pragmatism as a philosophy of individual success which 'nourished' American minds at the time of rapid economic development. He notes an almost literal repetition of Jamesian formulas in Henry Ford's writings. This is followed by an analysis of Marx's 1844 Manuscripts, *and his concept of humanised nature. To make his*

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hypothetical reconstruction of Marx's theory of knowledge more precise, Kolakowski distinguishes it from other systems with which it has a real or apparent affinity. He does not wish to discuss whether Spinoza's attempt to achieve an integral understanding of the world influenced nascent Marxism via Hegel, but stresses the importance of the striking resemblance between early Marxism and certain of Spinoza's ideas.

He finds in Spinoza's view of the world what he has hypothetically indicated as the basis of the young Marx's epistemology: the idea that nature made up of particular parts and categories is an 'artificial' creation, arising from man's practical needs and his effort to master nature. The analogy holds, however, only up to this point. Spinoza believed that the conditioning of the intellect by its everyday practical activity made it incapable of authentic knowledge of reality, but that there existed a higher cognitive instrument—the power of intuition—free from the distortions which theoretical reason could not escape. Spinoza's intuition, in one version at least, like Kant's practical reason, made possible the penetration of reality 'in itself', which is concealed by the distorting images of imagination and the empirical sciences. Marx rejects this enigmatic world, consigning it to the category of questions which are not susceptible of meaningful formulation. For Marx the creation of an object 'for use' is identical with the act of destroying the object 'in itself'.

IF the rejection of illusory images of knowledge which copies nature 'in itself' separates the epistemology of Marx from ideas of positivistic or scientistic inspiration, the rejection of knowledge which could assimilate reality by intuitive integration weakens possible analogies with Bergsonian thought. In this system, which it would be superfluous to expound here, we find the same Spinozan tendency to overcome the limitations and distortions inevitably imposed on us by discursive knowledge; to deprive discursive knowledge, precisely in view of its practical origin, of the validity at which the disinterested contemplation of truth aims. But Marx rejects the contrast between a world made in the image of man and a world pre-existing 'in itself', which you may try to grasp by the hopeless effort to transcend yourself as a human being. For the same reason, from Marx's viewpoint, it would be wrong to stigmatise discursive knowledge as 'distorted', since distortion, even if the word is relieved of its pejorative aura, could be confirmed only if we possessed a model with which the distorted image could be compared; an impossible operation since the world, as it is given to human kind, cannot be transcended. We have no right to suppose that pre-existing reality carries in itself qualities of human reality, nor have we any tools to explore the nature and kind of the distortions which it undergoes when it abandons its transcendentality to reveal itself to our eyes. Without denying its existence, or declaring it to be unknowable, we reject it as a possible object of investigation . . .

If it would be true, from Marx's point of view, to say consciousness is things thought of, his idea can be even more correctly generalised in the statement that things are consciousness reified. The first assertion concerns only the origin of consciousness in the contacts of the human species with the resistance of its medium considered generally as a totality or a pre-existing 'chaos'; the second takes into account the world of things already formed and differentiated amongst themselves; the first of the two worlds is the primal *universum* 'in itself', the Spinozan substance, while the second consists of objects with various qualities organised into categories, into groups preserved in human thought and language.

The existence of this 'chaos' is, however, by no means unimportant to epistemology; it is this precisely which defines the contrast between the Marxian and the Pragmatist theories of truth. Truth understood as a relation of 'resemblance' between human judgments and an absolutely independent reality is not indeed acceptable in the Marxian image of the world, but at least it does not consist exclusively in a relationship of biological correspondence, i.e., a relation between the judgment and its practical utility to the individual who makes it. On this basis we are forced to admit that reality is not only produced entirely *ex*

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nihilo for each particular individual, but also that this creation must be remade for the individual at every moment; for it is possible and probable that a judgment accepted as true at one moment on the strength of the criterion of utility will become a moment later useless, so devoid of sense or harmful, and therefore false. Pragmatist relativism—of which these formulations, though extreme, are none the less an unavoidable consequence if we take the 'classical' statements of James seriously and literally —cannot be reconciled with Marx's thought, and this for two main reasons. The first is the impossibility of creation *ex nihilo;* the second, the conception of human consciousness as a social instrument which cannot be reduced to the behaviour of particular organisms. Therefore reality is not the sum of the phenomena whose existence some individual finds it advantageous to affirm at a certain moment, or which constitute the momentary response of his consciousness to the promptings of his vital needs. There exists a reality common to all people, which remains constantly in its original state, a reality where the phenomenon of creation certainly takes place, but where a certain constant is also preserved, corresponding to what may be called human nature or the sum of human characteristics, biological needs, and social relationships which can properly be considered invariable. The concept of human nature retains its validity to the extent that the concept of a reality which is permanent as an epistemological category (a reality accessible to man, and so the only reality worth taking into account), is justified. The Aristotelean concept of truth applies also to this reality. The congruity of judgment and reality is no longer a relation of 'resemblance' between that judgment and the world 'in itself'; it applies to that world on which man has already imposed 'substantial forms'.

Kolakowski expands this 'not altogether classical' variant of the classical theory of truth, concluding that the replacement of God by man in Feuerbach leads Marx to the discovery of the world as a human product. Kolakowski then turns to the important consequences of this embryonic Marxian epistemology—which he thinks worthy of further development—in the field of the criticism of historical knowledge.

It is impossible to imagine that the human character of the world can ever be transcended in the cognition of man, who gave it this form. But the opinion is sometimes held that we are capable of liberating ourselves from everything in our image of the world which is imposed on us by changing historical conditions, or that an objective view of the world is possible within the limits determined by unchanging 'human nature'. This question has been much discussed with reference to man's knowledge of historical truth.

It seems possible here to adopt the standpoint from which Marx views the question of cognition in general, and regard historical knowledge as a function of tasks imposed on the investigator by his epoch. He analyses historical material and chooses his conceptual tools according to criteria of validity supplied by his own time and his particular milieu. In the history of ideas different interpretations of the same set of facts can give, each of them, a satisfactory explanation of all the phenomena observed. The historian of ideas often attributes to a thinker answers to questions which he had certainly never asked, but which the historian regards as valid from the standpoint of his own epoch. There is nothing surprising in this, and nothing from which we can free ourselves if the historical sciences are to exist. The historian of ideas is interested in understanding and interpreting known facts at least as much as in discovering facts previously hidden, and conflicting interpretations of the same facts can be defended, so that there is little hope that an absolutely definitive interpretation can ever be established once and for all. Technical criteria help us to choose between interpretations only to a limited extent. They make it possible to eliminate fantastic and grotesque interpretations but do not abolish the wide range of conflicting and tenable interpretations. It is rather unlikely that any new Platonic texts will be discovered, but certain that Plato's thought will never cease to be interpreted in the most various ways, and that no final version will ever establish itself permanently. It is the same with all historical work which makes advances without relying

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on new data. This situation is understandable if we take into account that we ask the thinkers of the past questions which our own situation imposes on us and which they did not ask themselves, because the sum of concepts which we use to investigate a problem took shape in our epoch. . . .

In relation to its material the science of the history of ideas is thus in a situation similar to that of the human species in relation to the world: it does not create its material *ex nihilo*, but imposes on it a definite system, and exercises a choice amongst factors which it is inclined unconsciously to assess as differentiated in one way or another according to importance. This is a statement of fact, not the expression of a deliberate intention to understand history as a projection of the present into the past; for the deliberate application of such a rule can lead to shocking distortions, and provides dangerous excuses for arbitrariness in the selection of facts and the neglect of data which do not fit in with an *a priori* hypothesis. The variable system of which I speak is a function of conditions never determined by the investigator according to his own preference.

Kolakowski goes on to argue that there is a limit to this similarity between scientific historical creation and the creative action of the human race as a whole upon its material 'substance'. The historian's use of a particular conceptual apparatus is conditioned by differences not only between historical epochs, but also between the world views which different social classes and groups create in one and the same epoch. When distinct representations of the same set of facts co-exist, and when each of them stands up to technical scrutiny, the choice between them is determined by a more general choice—the choice of a particular world-view, which forms an integral part of historical interpretation. In different world-views there are always and inevitably unverifiable elements, so that at a certain stage of analysis it is difficult to describe further decisions as choices between truth and falsehood. There is not much sense in hoping that total objectivity can be introduced once and for all into historical knowledge. This does not mean that we should not enlarge as much as possible the rational element in our philosophical structures, nor that there is no other way of qualifying statements which cannot be called true or false in the ordinary sense. It becomes a matter of choosing not between logical values but between values tout court. *There are some grounds for the assertion, associated especially with the Positivists, that value judgments cannot be deduced from descriptive judgments, but from the Marxian viewpoint it is inadequate.*

It follows from our previous observations that from Marx's point of view the choice of values or rather—since it is not a question of deliberate and voluntary acts—of preferences determined by practical considerations, forms an indispensable part of human cognition. To put it differently, the things of which our world is made up are chosen since they are created (in the meaning which we have here given to that word). It might seem then that the acceptance of certain values is implicit in every act of cognition, which could give grounds for supposing that the previously mentioned difference between the two possible forms of intellectual assimilation is baseless. This is not really so, if we take into account that the evaluations or rather the practical principles inextricably bound up with human cognition, understood generally, must not only be unconscious if they are to exercise their influence, but have taken on the form of a constant *habitus* peculiar to man as such, and so historically invariable. Hence there is no need to remember them or take account of them at all in intellectual work. These principles, common to the whole human species, have made our external world what it is, constant in its basic divisions; the values and preferences which we have put into this world are now latent in it, and the world has lost, in our eyes, the stamp we have given it and its constant human coefficient; the stamp is born and dies with man: there is no reason for man to retain a separate consciousness of it. This world can be regarded as a given thing, since no other exists and since everything we have added to it or fashioned in it has undergone, as far as we are concerned, a process of fossilisation into reality quasi-"in itself'. It is different in the case of those principles and practical preferences which

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change in the course of human history, the variations of which are clearly visible to man, and which divide the species into classes, peoples, professions, sexes, generations, character types, specific life situations—in short, everything which somehow influences the sum of the values which each of us is inclined to put above others. It is obvious that this world of values is not automatically created by the world of things, which is common to almost everyone and in which habits common to the whole species are implicit; the description of this first world, or rather these many different worlds (of value judgments) cannot be deduced from the description of the other (from judgments about facts, if we accept this clumsy term). In this sense the Positivist objection is justified.

To explain the inadequacy of the statement that the world of factual judgments and the world of value judgments are heterogeneous Kolakowski invokes the argument previously used in connection with the problem of historical knowledge. All knowledge contains elements which cannot be reduced to factual judgments. In all knowledge, besides those elements which can be examined and verified by the application of technical rules, there are elements imposed by a general world-view, where practical preferences and principles resolve the inevitable questions to which there is no way of obtaining a scientifically grounded answer. In sociology, the history of ideas, the history of culture, etc., it is impossible to get along without choices determined by values—which does not mean that these choices are quite arbitrary. This observation does not make it possible to raise value judgments to the level of theoretical judgments, but it brings their logical position close to that of the humane sciences.

THIS attempted exposition of what I believe to be the basis of Marx's epistemology leads to a simple conclusion: Marxism at its inception formulated an embryonic project for a theory of knowledge which, later on in the evolution of the school of thought identified by Marx's name, was replaced by the radically different conception of Engels, and more particularly of Lenin. (I say more particularly because of the extreme formulations which Lenin used to describe his theory of reflection and of a consciousness which copies and imitates reality.) Let us dispense with analysis of the reasons which contributed to this peculiar development. There are certainly more than one (in the case of Engels we can hardly omit the simple influence of Positivist scientism, which was widespread in his day, and in Lenin's case the influence of the Russian materialist tradition; but this is only part of the explanation).

When we study Marx's manuscripts we also find obvious connections, which he himself made, between his conception of knowledge, his 'denaturalisation' of the world, and the idea of the abolition of human alienation by a communist society. And although there is nowadays nothing easier than to point out how very utopian was Marx's conviction that 'communism as the positive abolition of private property' is identical with the abolition of human alienation in general, we may believe that his epistemological point of departure has not for that reason become philosophically unproductive. We know of other, analogous ideas—entangled in different contexts and so taking on different meanings—which appeared quite independently of the Marxist tradition in the work of many philosophers.

It is in any case probable that a certain method for the analysis of human knowledge, both for everyday experience and for the arts and sciences, could be worked out on the basis of this fundamental idea of Marx: man the cognitive creature is only a part of the whole man; this part is continually involved in the process of progressive autonomisation, in spite of which it can only be understood as a function of the continuous dialogue between human needs and their objects; this dialogue, which is called work, creates both the human species and its external world, which for this reason is accessible to man only in its humanised form. In this sense it can be said that nowhere in the whole universe could man find a well so deep that he would not see his own face at the bottom of it.

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II. Schaff

THE study of the young Marx has in recent years acquired a political importance. Because it is increasingly difficult to deny outright the role and significance of Marx, attacks on Marxism more and more frequently take the form of an alleged defence of 'true' Marxism against a 'corrupt' version. The young Marx, creator of 'authentic' Marxism, is opposed to the mature Marx, author of 'corrupt' Marxism. People who oppose the young Marx to Engels are doing exactly the same thing, because it is known that every step which Engels took in the realm of theory was not only known to Marx but expressly approved by him.

This opposition between the young and the mature Marx, by no means new in the history of Marxology, has now become a favourite method with revisionists, who process Marx in their own likeness. This distortion is possible to some extent because the study of the young Marx has so far been neglected.

There are two main reasons for the importance of and the current interest in the study of the young Marx.

A fuller knowledge of the young Marx's intellectual evolution is necessary for the deeper understanding of the origins and development of Marxism. Marx's works from this period only recently became accessible to the reader, and the basic study of that period, that of A. Cornu, is historical rather than interpretative. That it is so far the only work of this type is explained by the conditions of a period when false political considerations militated against the discussion of early Marxian humanism.

This brings us to the second reason for the topicality and attraction of Young-Marxian problems in the peculiar conditions of the current ideological struggle in Poland. The young Marx, as is easily understandable against the background of his age and his personal development, wrestled with the problem of the human individual and his relationship to society and nature (the world). He followed a natural path from bourgeois radical to revolutionary communist views, to which he then remained unswervingly true. But the problems of his youth, on the face of it similar in many respects to those which baffle the present-day existentialists, and the way in which the young Marx wrestled with them, were bound to attract people who came up against such problems because of the shocks which the workers' movement has experienced, and could find no answer to them outside existentialism. It is not surprising that such people, especially the young ones, enthusiastically 'discovered' the young Marx and his specific problems. It is not surprising that in circumstances of psychological shock and ideological chaos, they began to interpret the 'newly discovered' Marx in their own way, although in fact, because of textual difficulties and complicated connections between Marx and the Young Hegelians, unknown to our readers, they simply did not understand him.

Marx the existentialist, Marx the voluntarist, Marx the pragmatist—these are only a few of the freaks which have been presented, and sometimes still are, as a portrait of the young Marx. The conclusion to be drawn is that we must set about a more thorough study of him.

The question is: how should such a study be carried out?

Marx once explained one of the basic theses of his philosophy of history in this way: the anatomy of man is the key to understanding the anatomy of the monkey. In other words, higher levels of development make it easier for us to understand lower levels.

Acting on this principle, there is only one way to analyse the early Marxian period: in the context of Marx's development, in the light of his evolution, which becomes visible from the heights of his maturity. Early Marxian humanism shows its true visage in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme;* his conceptions of freedom, the problem of the relation of the individual to society, find their interpretation in the *Communist Manifesto* and the theory of class struggle there expounded, etc.

What then should we say of attempts to detach the young Marx from the mature Marx, or to set them against each other?

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Such a procedure is possible in the case of an individual who abandons fully developed views for others quite different. This is not the case with Marx. Neither his youthful idealism, nor his changes of opinion in the years 1843-1847, can be looked at as though they were a stable and fully formed system of views.

Such enemies of Marxism as Calvez and Bigot do not stop at contrasting the young Marx's views with the mature system of scientific socialism. To a historian of ideas this is nonsense, but at least they go the whole hog. But the revisionists usually leave Marx himself in peace, and contrast him with Engels, who is regarded as mainly responsible for the corruption of Marxism in the spirit of positivism according to some, or of dogmatism and schematism according to others. . . .

From the moment that Marx started work on *Capital* there was an agreed division of labour between them, and Engels' share included polemics in the philosophical field. Their correspondence shows that every step which either of the partners took was submitted to the other and criticised or approved. Marx not only had no objections to Engels' published philosophical views but unreservedly associated himself with them, in later years just as in the Young Hegelian period . . .

Seen in this light, Kolakowski's article looks rather pathetic. If he is opposing Marx to Engels, this is mere nonsense, and shows that he is insufficiently acquainted with the history of Marxism. If he is opposing the young Marx to the mature Engels, this means opposing the young Marx to the mature Marx, which is no less nonsensical from the point of view of the historian of ideas.

The article has two themes. First, there are the deductions about the theory of truth, supposedly implicit in the epistemological views of the young Marx, reconstructed, or rather constructed, by the author on the basis of quotations from the *Manuscripts*. Then there are the arguments about the supposed contrast between Marx on the one hand, and Engels and Lenin on the other, in their views on the theory of truth, and hence in a number of other basic epistemological and ontological questions. This second theme, though it takes up much less space than the first, is the central polemical question. If the article did not raise it I should not rise to the first theme. Not because I do not see, or do not take seriously, Kolakowski's errors. But because, when we have representatives of bourgeois, Catholic, and revisionist thought amongst us, Marxists cannot waste their time replying to every nonsensical utterance in an esoteric article which a hundred people in Poland will read and twenty understand. Especially as the reply only awakens interest in the original article, and makes a sensation of it. But the political implications of the subject demand a polemical reply to Kolakowski's statements on the alleged antithesis between the views of Marx and Engels.

Kolakowski puts forward two theses:

(1) that the epistemological views allegedly reconstructed on the basis of statements in the *Manuscripts* are Marx's real epistemology;

(2) that Marx's epistemological views are opposed to those of Engels and Lenin.

I consider both these theses utterly false. But to simplify things, let us suppose to begin with that the first of them is correct. What follows?

In 1844, when Marx wrote his *Manuscripts*, he was 26. Let us suppose that he did then express the epistemological views which Kolakowski, quite groundlessly, attributes to him. After 1844 Marx lived almost forty years longer, and these were the years of his mature creative work. True, because of the division of labour between him and Engels, he wrote little about philosophy in later years. But it is known that he kept up his interest in it to the end, that he left behind extracts from philosophical works copied out in the last year of his life, that he always hoped to write a concise exposition of the dialectic, that there are sporadic philosophical observations in his later works, and finally that he very diligently watched Engels' creative work in philosophy and entirely shared his views. If, as Kolakowski claims, Engels was influenced by Positivist scientism (and it is true that some of the stimuli which affected positivism also influenced the development of Marx and Engels) then so was Marx. If it is true that in 1844 Marx still

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occupied the idealistic positions in epistemology, close to Jamesian Pragmatism, which Kolakowski wrongly attributes to him, the same Marx in later years voiced different views. For instance, his formulations in the preface to the second German edition of *Capital* are expressly based on the materialist theory of reflection, and so on the classical theory of truth. Should this not be mentioned when we are talking about Marxist epistemology, or the embryo of a Marxist epistemology? If the 'embryo' of 1844 really were incompatible with mature Marxism, then it would not be the real embryo of Marxist epistemology but a potential embryo, later rejected. Is it not nonsense to isolate some early stage in Marx's thought, when he was still an idealist (this is not true in respect of the *Manuscripts* of 1844, but is true for instance of 1841), and to assert that the philosophy of Marxism is idealism; just as it would be nonsense to assert that Marxism in politics is identical with bourgeois radicalism, because in some early period the young Marx did in fact pay homage to that creed? Is this not a typical attempt to oppose the young Marx to the mature Marx, based on the tacit premise that the young Marx, up to about 1844, is the 'true' Marx, whom the later Marx of the *Communist Manifesto* 'betrayed'? . . .

Turning to Kolakowski's observations on the relation of Marxism to the classical theory of truth, let us begin with a general outline of the problem.

The theory of truth is concerned above all with solving the following problem: when is our knowledge true and what do we mean by such a statement? Answers to this question follow one of two main lines.

According to one of them true knowledge exists when we say that something is so and it is in reality as we say. The truth of knowledge depends on its agreement with a reality existing independently of ourselves. Materialists subscribe to this classical theory of truth.

According to the second type of answer, true knowledge occurs when it corresponds to certain norms and principles which we accept. Examples are the theory of coherence, theory of evidence, theory of general agreement, theory of utility (first version of Pragmatism), and the theory of the economy of thought. Such definitions are known as non-classical, and are accepted by the idealistic schools of philosophy.

So then truth in the materialist acceptation consists in the agreement of knowledge with objective reality, which is reflected by human consciousness, while in the subjective idealistic acceptation it consists in the agreement of knowledge with rules dictated by consciousness.

Thus the position of a philosopher on the problem of truth provides a simple test to ascertain his position in the struggle between materialism and idealism—even if like the neopositivists he proclaims himself neutral.

It is impossible to deny the classical theory of truth without denying materialism. Kolakowski, however, set out to show that the young Marx negated the classical definition of truth and at the same time to promote the epistemology of which this negation was the result to the status of 'true' Marxism, in contrast to the subsequent falsification by Engels. The only way to achieve this was to show that the author of the *Manuscripts* was not a materialist, but in one way or another an idealist. And Kolakowski makes an obviously strained attempt to represent the young Marx as such an idealist. . . .

Even if the young Marx had evolved an idealistic epistemology there would be no need for us to defend ourselves against it. It would only mean that we had to do with immature views, views in the formative stage, as opposed to the finalised epistemology of Marx in his maturity. But the nub of the matter is that there is no idealistic epistemology where Kolakowski discerns it with the eyes of his imagination.

Delusive phantasy, as usual, hides a methodological error. Kolakowski, as a historian of philosophy, should know that the analysis of a thinker's views, especially those which he held at a period of furious development, cannot abstract from their revolutionary context. It can truly be said with reference to philosophical statements taken out of context that there is nothing new under the sun, in the sense that the same or similar words will have been used by somebody else. But did they have the same meaning? The answer to that

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must be given by the scholar who studies them in the context of a system, and knows that the meaning of statements formally identical is determined by their context. This is a banal truth for all historians of thought, not just for Marxists. If Marx, James, and Bergson speak of the 'humanisation of nature' they are making statements which sound the same but do not mean the same thing.

We know that Marx became a materialist, and with reservations a Feuerbachian, in 1841, and was certainly affected by Feuerbach's anthropological conceptions. We know also that the *Theses on Feuerbach* followed shortly after the *Manuscripts* (in the spring of 1845). They give us the key to the understanding of the often obscure *Manuscripts*, show the direction of Marx's evolution, and decipher various concepts and terms. Soon after came the *German Ideology*, with its materialist interpretation of history. Anyone who reads the *Manuscripts* outside this context is in fact reading only his own thoughts.

Kolakowski bases his crazy construction (not reconstruction) on the fact that Marx introduces *practice* into his theory of knowledge, and asserts not only that man is the creation of nature but that nature is the creation of man. Agreed. The whole question comes down to this: what is understood by the word 'practice', and how do you define the 'humanisation of nature'?

Epistemology poses two distinct but interconnected questions concerning the objectivity of knowledge:

(i) whether the object which we know exists objectively, i.e. independently of all consciousness, and

(ii) whether and to what extent knowledge which reflects objective reality is connected with man's practical activity, and how as a result the subjective factor enters into the objective process of cognition.

All materialists acknowledge not only the objective but also the material existence of the object of which we have cognition, but this does not predetermine our attitude to the question of the connection between cognition and man's practical activity.

Marx, unlike mechanistic materialists, and unlike Feuerbach, sees the active aspect of human consciousness, and the practical activity of man engaged in transforming nature as a basic category in his theory of knowledge. In the *Theses on Feuerbach* he stresses that idealism, not materialism, has so far developed the active aspect. As a materialist he postulates the development of the active aspect, not abstractly, after the manner of the idealists, but in the form of practice, of human sensory activity, as he says. If the active aspect is understood in this way it becomes understandable, as Marx says, that not only is man the creation of circumstances, but that circumstances are created by man.

Man, according to this conception, obtains knowledge by acting, by changing the world. Practice understood as human sensory activity is the basis, the source of knowledge. In this sense Marx gives a materialistic interpretation of empiricism.

The *Theses on Feuerbach* are a recapitulation, and a logical conclusion from, the *Manuscripts*. They are devoted to the role of practice in human cognition and social life. But there is not a grain of idealism in them; they are thoroughly materialistic. Whence then did Kolakowski get his construction? Let us see how it is done.

Kolakowski writes: 'The view of the world presented in the *Manuscripts*, in my opinion, originates in attempts to assess man's practical activities as a factor determining his behaviour as a cognitive being'.

Can we agree with this? We can. But here is the next sentence:

'This attempt, from the viewpoint of historical tradition, makes Marx's reflections resemble certain ideas in the doctrine of Spinoza; analogous ideas were to appear later in the analyses of Bergson'.

Here the cat is out of the bag. The author, to put it politely, simply understands his text in a very peculiar way. Anyone who confuses the Marxist with the Pragmatist category of practice, or mixes it up with Bergson's philosophy of creativity, simply does not understand what he has read in the young Marx. . . .

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There is a basic confusion here. Kolakowski reasons like this: since man obtains knowledge in the process of practice, he introduces into knowledge a subjective element connected with his perceptual apparatus and his social needs and conditions. So far so good. But here is the unexpected conclusion: because of this we cannot even ask about 'absolutely independent' reality, or being 'in itself'. Here we have a typical non sequitur. When we speak of 'absolutely independent' reality or of being 'in itself' we do so in a very definite sense: we are concerned to underline the materialistic thesis that reality is not the creation of consciousness, but exists independently of and outside it. From the assertion that a subjective factor affects our knowledge it does not follow that the object which we know is a subjective creation. The distinction between these two questions is elementary. To blur this distinction is to blur what is basic to materialism—the recognition of the objective existence of material objects. Kolakowski carries this to its logical conclusion, and what is more as Marx's plenipotentiary:

'If it would be correct to say, from Marx's point of view, that consciousness is things thought of, it would be even more accurate to generalise his thought by saying that things are consciousness reified'.

Here Marx has been made into a pure subjective idealist. This in spite of the author's earlier assurances that being 'in itself' cannot, in the light of Marx's doctrine, be deduced from consciousness. Apparently, after all, it can.

But now the way ahead is clear. Kolakowski says expressly that his arguments on the theory of truth are only a conclusion drawn from his general epistemological considerations. Once we understand practice à la Bergson, and objective reality has been reduced to a product of subjective creation, we can boldly assert that Marx negated the classical definition of truth . . .

In conclusion Schaff says that since the subject of early Marxism has been raised it should now be studied positively, and not just for the purpose of polemics with those who distort it.

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ERNST BLOCH, PHILOSOPHER OF HOPE

Jürgen Rühle

We have no confidence, we have only hope. Ernst Bloch

Commenting on the publication in West Germany of Ernst Bloch's Das Prinzip Hoffnung, *a Hamburg critic noted that, even if everybody but this East German philosopher had been silent for the last few years, 'this document of marvellous poetry was enough to show that there was still great German literature, that it had lost nothing of its richness'. He added that Bloch (like Heidegger) was read in Montevideo, Kobe, and Melbourne. It is difficult to think of a more formidable exaggeration. Bloch is practically unknown outside Germany; as for his awkward and often slightly ridiculous style, the less said the better. Bloch's writings, especially in his later years, are a curious mixture of profound insight, confused and irrelevant deviations from his theme, and lip service to Stalinist ideology. Of C. J. Jung, Ernst Bloch observes somewhere in his magnum opus that the archaic element in his work makes an alien and unsuitable impression, as though the customs of Timbuktu had been grafted on to the traditions of Zürich. With even greater justification it could be said that the Stalinist element in Bloch appears like an importation from Timbuktu to Pankow—or to Ludwigshafen, where Bloch was born. For all that, it is a matter for regret that Bloch is not better known outside Germany; with all his oddities and intellectual perversities, he is probably the one original living communist thinker anywhere in the world. That he is head and shoulders above the exponents of official party ideology in his homeland need hardly be emphasised. The present biographical essay may serve as an introduction to Bloch's work during the last two decades. Among his earlier books* Vom Geist der Utopie (1918), Thomas Muenzer als Theologe der Revolution (1922), Erbschaft der Zeit (1923), *and* Sein und Zeit (1927), *deserve to be mentioned.*

THE emeritus professor at the Karl Marx University of Leipzig, who began his career in 1918 with his *Vom Geist der Utopie,* is now 74 years old. A man with a luxuriant mass of greyish white hair, an impressively furrowed forehead, and an earnest face marked with the cares and hopes of a lifetime. The eyes are hidden behind thick glasses. His movements and general attitude have a nobility which gives meaning to every step and every word.

Although he never intended to be one, he is a German professor of the good old type, with the characteristic intellectual energy, retiring nature, and occasional absentmindedness: a professor in the style of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel: Marx was the same type though he never actually became a professor. 'German thunder', Heine said, 'is very German indeed: not very subtle, it approaches with a slow rumble'.

When I first met Bloch we sat in what remained of the Hotel Adlon in the midst of the ruins which surround the Brandenburger Tor. For a whole night he talked about the revolutionary prophecies of the Bible. He himself had something of the power and fire and anger of the ancient prophets. This man who at first seemed so wise and slow and dignified was yet able to cast a spell on the listener and fire him with enthusiasm. He was able to illuminate the age-long history of civilisation with the summer lightning of his hopes and expectations. He spoke as he writes. The poetry of Luther's German sparkles behind the wilful terminology. From the broad, thought-laden exposition comes the sudden flash of a vivid image lighting up the workings of his mind. He can be sarcastic, even bitter, and it seemed to me that his intoxicating hopes for the future were even at that time made dim by a tragic melancholy. He seemed to be a revolutionary in spite of everything. Perhaps he needed the overwhelming impulse of hope inside him to maintain the balance of a life without compromise, full of restless wanderings, persecution, and disappointment.

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BLOCH'S philosophy is based on a human experience which he calls the darkness of the lived in moment.

> . . . in the final analysis the darkest moment of all is the present moment in which we are actually living now. The present moment is the centre of our experience and open to question; the moment we have just lived through is the most immediate moment and therefore least of all in a state to be experienced. Only when the present moment has just gone or when and as long as it is being awaited is it not only lived in but also experienced. When the present moment is actually in existence it is shrouded in darkness. Only that which is just about to come or which has just passed has the distance, the lack of absolute immediacy which is necessary before the growing consciousness of a particular moment can come fully alive. The present moment in which we are, burrows within itself and does not feel itself. Hence the content of that which has just been experienced cannot be perceived.[1]

On many occasions Bloch has encircled the mystery which reigns in this darkness of the present moment. He speaks of the 'That-ground', of the 'node of the world', of the 'womb of matter' and so on; but he regards the mystery as ultimately impenetrable and indefinable. He is willing to leave it at that.

It seems to him that the only definite fact is that there is ferment and activity in the life of man and the world. There is within us an urge, a striving, and a need to break away from the emptiness of the moment; we feel that non-being is a kind of non-having: the world is kept in motion by a *horror vacui*. Bloch argues, against Freud, that it is impossible to make such a specific instinct as the sexual libido the common denominator of the world; he speaks in more general terms of hunger, by which he evidently means not only the physical rumbling of the stomach, but need in general, dissatisfaction with the present state of things. By hunger he means everything inside us that longs to eat, drink, overwhelm, live fully and be fulfilled. Even in the pre-human and extra-human world Bloch has discovered this same urge to escape from the imperfection and unfulfilment of a shadow existence, from what the shoemaker-philosopher Jacob Boehme called the 'Agony of Matter.' According to Bloch, this impulse from darkness into light is the origin of history and the power behind the evolving process of the world. The world process is tending towards an ultimate goal which Bloch calls the supreme good, Totum and Ultimum, Identity, Success, the breaking in of the What into the ground of the That. Again, Bloch refuses to give precise expression to this ultimate goal, since it has not yet emerged clearly enough and is still wholly a presentiment. It is the meaning of life, the conscience of history, blessedness and the Promised Land, the Utopian content which is implicit in the 'Linger on, thou art so beautiful' of the Faust plan. Bloch has given most concrete expression to what he has in mind in the words of Marx, 'the naturalisation of man and the humanisation of nature', or, in other words, 'socialised humanity in alliance with humanised nature will turn the world into a real home'. All our willing and yearning and hope is directed to this ultimate end which gives content and meaning to the world. There is a presentiment of the Ultimate, of the Ineffable in our wish-fulfilment dreams and in the ciphers of reality and archetypes which mysteriously rule our life and thought, in the fictional figures of super humanity such as Don Quixote, Don Giovanni, Odysseus and Faust, in the golden ground of music, in the eschatological promises of religion, in the shining world of Nature. A mysterious paradisian landscape emerges from the dawn of the future, a new heaven and a new earth to which everything tends but where no one ever was. Two sentences of Goethe's span the arch of the world as conceived by Bloch: 'In the beginning was the Deed' and 'The indescribable here is achieved'.

TO a Western observer Bloch's philosophy, with its Old Testament fervour, its optimistic belief in progress, and its concept of political salvation, seems strangely exotic; the principle of Hope which Bloch advocates is out of fashion with us, at any rate with our augurs and philosophers. This may explain, though it does not excuse, the unfortunate fact that for

[1] *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, I, 312.

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many years Western Germany has ignored one of our most stimulating and important thinkers. One has also to take into account Bloch's peculiar and anything but happy merging of speculative philosophy and current politics. In the midst of profound general ideas he will suddenly refer to the cultural barbarism of America and to Soviet peace policy. C. G. Jung he dismisses as a 'frothy fascist psychoanalyst': Huxley as an 'individualistic fascist and criminal'. Stalin haunts Bloch's writings as a paragon of wisdom, just as Hegel was once haunted by the world-spirit on horseback—Napoleon.

On the other hand, however, there is an obvious difference between this philosophy and the ideology of the Communist Party; compared with this ideology, which Bloch himself has mischievously called a 'narrow-gauge theory', his work displays an overpowering wealth and audacity of thought, an intimate and masterly knowledge of the history of civilisation, and an abundance of genuine wisdom, which compel our admiration quite independently of the philosophical and political contents of his work.

Bloch's main work, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (The Principle of Hope)[2], is a veritable encyclopedia of human aspirations and longings. Beginning with common or garden daydreams and the intoxicating hubbub of the fairground and the delirium of the opium-addict, he goes on to describe all the utopias and ideals which man has rigged up for himself from time immemorial in politics, learning, art, and philosophy. His survey of the whole realm of human hope culminates in the revelations which have come to humanity in its supreme moments.

In his later work. *Differentiations in the Concept of Progress*[3], Bloch gave the outlines of a Marxist philosophy of nature and cosmology; in his memorable lecture on Hegel in November, 1956, he suggested that Dialectical Materialism should be extended by a Marxist anthropology and a Marxist ethic and even a philosophy of religion based on Feuerbach.

It is not surprising that the SED has always been rather afraid of this 'worker on the philosophical front'. But it tolerated him as a distinguished ally, just as it tolerated Brecht (although neither was a member of the SED). Party professor Kurt Hager, the secretary of the Central Committee responsible for ideology, speaking of progressive philosophy, distinguished, with nicety of feeling, between 'adherents of dialectical materialism and such thinkers as Ernst Bloch'.[4] After long hesitation the Party decided, in the thaw of 1955, to bestow on Bloch the National Prize and the silver Order of Merit of the Fatherland: on this occasion it was acknowledged that his works, even if not precisely on the party line, 'combine a profoundly penetrating analysis and interpretation of the world with a progressive outlook'.[5] Bloch himself felt quite friendly towards the SED regime: in spite of many differences on matters of detail he hoped that Communism would lead to the realisation of his dreams.

THE revolutionary spark in Bloch's philosophy is the dialectic. He speaks somewhere of the warm stream and the cold stream in Marxism, the warm and the cold Red. The warm stream is the impulse to freedom, the thinking in terms of process, the revolutionary impulse of the dialectic; the cold stream is the realistic analysis of situations, the thinking in terms of visible systems, the sobering insight into what is feasible and useful. The one is an expression of Marxism's hopes for the future, its goal of human redemption, its deeply human impulses, whilst the other is an expression of its adaptation to the tasks of the immediate present, political strategy and tactics—power politics. The warm stream represents the inspiration of a great idea; the cold stream the hard realities of the actual world: the dove on the rooftop as opposed to the sparrow in the hand. Although Bloch admits that the two

[2] Aufbauverlag, East Berlin, 3 vols., 1954, 1955, 1959.

[3] Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1956.

[4] *Neues Deutschland* (East Berlin), 8 July 1955.

[5] *Ibid*, 15 October 1955.

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kinds of red supplement one another, he himself obviously believes in the warm kind: for him Marxism is a doctrine of warmth. He does not find it difficult to make derogatory remarks about the cold Red; he says, for example that whereas the warm Red is a faith, the cold Red is an acid, and it acts as a brake on the flight of the spirit. One is tempted to draw the conclusion which Bloch himself only hints at in this context: that Bloch's philosophy is an expression of the warm stream in Marxism and Stalinist dialectical materialism an expression of the cold stream. The difference is apparent if one compares the historical ancestors (apart from Marx) whom they claim for their respective ideas. 'The good new is never completely new' Bloch writes in the Preface of his main work.

> Even Christians know, with amazement or a sleeping conscience, that all the Utopian aspirations of the great movements of human liberation, derive from Exodus and the Messianic parts of the Bible. And the conjunction of having and non-having which constitutes hope and yearning and the homing instinct has always been active in the great philosophies. It is active not only in the Platonic Eros but also in the far-reaching concept of Aristotelian matter as the potentiality of being, and in the Leibnizian concept of tendency. Hope is directly active in the Kantian postulates of the moral consciousness, and it is active through the agency of the world spirit, in Hegel's historical dialectic.[6]

This genealogy consists without exception of idealist thinkers, and this is not surprising, since the idea of dialectic as the dynamic impulse of history, was seized on mainly by thinkers who have risen above dull reality and hastened on ahead of it. How is it possible, however, to reconcile this genealogy with Zhdanov's declaration at the notorious philosophers' congress of 1947, that dialectical materialism has evolved entirely from the materialist philosophy of the past, in opposition to idealism, which has always looked after the interests of the selfish upper classes? If Zhdanov is right, Bloch's intellectual ancestors stand on the other side of the barricade. Of course, with the exception of Marx—but it seems likely that Bloch and the Stalinists also differ in their views on Marxism.

Behind the practical political difference there is also a theoretical difference: the question whether the Soviet order of society already represents the realm of freedom of which Marx dreamt.

There are, Bloch says, many stages in the humanisation of man still to be passed through, when work has been made free; it will not have been achieved for all time on the first day of the classless society. At the conference on the problem of freedom held in 1956 he declared quite openly that freedom in the so-called socialist states is by no means identical with the ultimate goal which they pursue and that in these states some of the bourgeois freedoms gained in the past no longer exist or have still to return.[7] And in his book *The Principle of Hope* he has confessed with the typical ponderousness which Heine attributed to all German philosophers:

> Revolutions realise humanity's oldest hopes: for that very reason they imply and require the increasingly concrete achievement of the ideal of freedom and the never completed journey towards its realisation. Only if Utopia itself (that is, a kind of reality that has never been so far) were to take possession of the dynamic content of the Here and Now, would the Hope which is the ground of its existence be totally incorporated in reality. Until that day comes, the world of daydreams will continue; no instalment payment can make man forget it. A mere presentiment must not be made so absolute that remembrance of the ultimate goal is dimmed . . . a remembrance expressed supremely in the words of the psalmist: If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

BLOCH'S philosophy marches out towards great horizons, revealing the 'quite titanic role of human action or freedom' of which Hommes has spoken. Without the possibility

[6] *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, I, 17.

[7] 'Freiheit, ihre Schichtung, und ihr Verhältnis zur Wahrheit'. Protokoll der Konferenz der Sektion Philosophie der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1956.

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of choice, Bloch says, there can be no progress: and if the whole process of the world has been determined in advance, anything new can occur at most in the human consciousness, not in reality. If the whole of the future has been pre-determined, wonder and doubt can have as little place in the world as a desire for reform and change. All man can do is follow the iron logic of history or let it run its course—if everything has been pre-determined, man is not an engine driver but a mere passenger, who is simply allowed to buy a ticket to socialism at the Communist party's booking office. According to Bloch, however, man makes his own history; he is certainly dependent on tendencies and opportunities which are embedded in the budding entelechy of the womb of matter but 'the decision has not yet been taken and the thing itself has not yet emerged'. There are negative and positive potentialities, all existence is encompassed with the nothingness, to which the world is moving as it is also moving to the All, to a state of ultimate bliss and fulfilment. Failure and emptiness beckon from the horizon as well as happiness and fulfilment. The dreamed of heaven gleams against the dark background of hell: life is still swallowed up in death and it is still far from certain whether life or death will triumph in the end. We have no confidence, Bloch says, we have only Hope.

This conception of the openness and undecidedness of history is possibly the most exciting feature of Bloch's thought: it throws the rattling machinery of dialectical materialism entirely overboard and gives new scope to the freedom of the will and the power of decision. 'Freedom of the will,' Bloch said at the conference on Freedom which we have already mentioned, 'comes from a willing that is brought to fruition by a progressive series of choices, decisions and actions. Choice is the starting point of freedom . . .'

This means that no one possesses the key to paradise, not even the Marxists or the party that claims to be always right. Man himself decides whether the world is to be more human or more devilish, whether the sky is to clear or grow dark and gloomy. National socialism and Stalinism (the 'cult of the personality') were not conjured up by some cunning trick in the workings of the laws of history but by our own failure, by our own unmindfulness of humanity. The wrathful protest of the people on 17 June, 1953 and 23 October, 1956 was not a barren bough on the tree of knowledge, no mere blunder in the irresistible advance towards Communism, but a *mene tekel* at the crossroads of history.

With this view of history, man himself moves into the centre of philosophy. Man, says Bloch, is not a slave, neither is he a master; he is not a serf, neither is he a feudal lord; not a proletarian and, just as certainly, not a capitalist. Man is the being for whom the future still holds much in store. He is constantly being transformed in and through his work. He comes again and again to frontiers and passes over them. The future of history lies in his bravery, not in some mythos of the proletariat. Man is the hinge on which the door to freedom swings. The SED expert on Bloch, his former pupil and later rival in Leipzig, Rugard Otto Gropp, rightly set at the head of his criticism the following statement: 'In his view of the world Ernst Bloch proceeds from man. It is this that gives his philosophy its fundamental character and differentiates it straightaway from dialectical materialism'.

Bloch's philosophy does in fact provide the basis for humanist socialism, i.e., a socialism of man, a socialism of humanity. Ten years before the Polish and Hungarian October risings he wrote: 'The root of history is the working man; once he has seized hold of himself and established himself in a real democracy without alienation and renunciation, something will come into the world in which no one so far has ever been: a true home'.[8]

THE sinister and dangerous factor in Bloch's philosophy, from the standpoint of dialectical materialism, emerges very clearly from a myth of which there is an account in *The Principle of Hope;* the myth of the dual Helen. According to a fragment of Euripides, only a phantom of Helen was carried off to Troy; the real Helen survived the time of the disorders bravely and chastely in Egyptian

[8] *Freiheit und Ordnung,* New York, 1946.

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exile. Her consort Menelaus finds her there to his great surprise when he returns home from Troy and at the same time the Trojan Helen, who has been carried on the ship, dissolves into a column of fire—the princely lady returns home an honest woman in her own flesh; everyone congratulates Menelaus on possessing such an honourable wife. 'However,' Bloch says, 'what happens in the real depths of the affair is this: the Trojan or phantom Helen has the advantage over the Egyptian Helen in that she has inhabited a dream for ten years and has indeed fufilled the dream. This is not entirely counteracted by the later actual fulfilment; the radiant residue of the dream remains, there remains a wisp of fiery air, Fata Morgana has an independent existence. The object of the real fulfilment was not present in the adventures, as opposed to the dream-object; the fulfilled reality represents a very late acquaintance. Only the Trojan, not the Egyptian Helen, travelled with the army, absorbed the yearning of the ten utopian years, the bitterness and the hate-love of the cuckold, the many nights far from home, the rough camp life, and the anticipation of victory. The weights are easily exchanged: in this aporia the remarkable siren of the air in Troy, with whom is bound up a world of guilt, suffering, but above all of hope, remains almost the sole reality, and reality almost becomes a phantom. Quite apart from the coquettish glamour of the Trojan Helen, the Egyptian Helen lacks the utopian glamour of the Trojan Helen, she did not share the yearning of the voyage, the adventures of battle, the goal of achievement; and so the Egyptian reality as such seems to be on a smaller scale.'[9]

Ernst Bloch's philosophy is a communism of revolutionary illusions, illumined by the fiery glow of Utopia. Such a communism is infinitely superior to Stalinism, in spite of the latter's power and might: it is the incarnation of the hopes and sacrifices of many utopian years; his cause has nothing to link it with the reality of the labour camp and the execution cellar. That is what makes Party Professor Gropp so angry and scornful:

> By virtue of its mystical, teleologically inverted character, which seems to teem with problems, and also thanks to its journalistic style, the philosophy of Ernst Bloch exerts an attraction on certain strata of the intelligentsia and on students who have become divorced from practical affairs and have no political experience. They find here a philosophy the acceptance of which demands no open break with Marxism, because it calls itself Marxist, whilst allowing its adherents to detach themselves from Marxism. Bloch's philosophy appeals to a petit-bourgeois frame of mind which is inclined to socialism but evades the difficulties which socialist action involves in the conflict of the new and the old, and against the wiles of imperialism. Bloch's philosophy supplies an ideological foundation for presumptuousness *vis-à-vis* Marxism and for its ideological undermining.[10]

THAT Bloch himself is aware of this problem if not in relation to Communism, and that he is a convinced adherent of a Utopian mission is clear from the section in his main work which is entitled 'The Encounter of the Utopian Function with Ideology'. Since ideologies always stem from ruling classes, he writes, 'they justify the existing social order, inasmuch as they deny its economic roots and conceal the exploitation on which it is based'.

Utopia, therefore, only draws the spark, not the ashes, out of the fire of history:

> It is only in this way that Utopia extracts the things that belong to it from the ideologies and explains the progressive elements which continue to act historically in the great works of ideology itself. The spirit of Utopia is present in the ultimate essence of every great creative utterance, in the Strassburg Minster and the Divine Comedy, in Beethoven's prophetic music and in the latencies of the B minor Mass. It is in the despair which is in a *Unum necessarium* even when it is lost in the Hymn to Joy. Kyrie and Credo are absorbed in the concept of Utopia, as that of hope understood, in quite a different way even when they have lost the reflex of a

[9] *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, I, 201f.

[10] R. O. Gropp: 'Mystische Hoffnungsphilosophie ist unvereinbar mit Marxismus', *Forum* (East Berlin), No. 6, 1957.

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merely time-bound ideology, in fact just then. The exact imagination of the not-yet-conscious supplements critical enlightenment by revealing the gold which has not been attacked by nitric acid and the good that remains valid and emerges when class illusions and class ideologies have been destroyed. The only loss that culture suffers from the end of class ideologies, in which it was a purely decorative element, is the decoration itself, the artificially perfect harmonisation. The function of Utopia is to rescue human culture from the idleness of mere contemplation; it opens up a view, on summits that have really been attained, of the true content of human hope undissembled by ideology.[11]

In the *Principle of Hope* Bloch denies that this is to be understood in reference to communism, but who could prevent the young men who streamed into his lecture room and read his books thinking of it in reference to communism? Not only Eastern but Western ideologists are habitually attacking Bloch for the unreal, fragmentary, and poetically hazy nature of his ideas. He himself would give a very simple answer: 'Seeing through things is not the only test of a sharp eye. Not regarding everything as being crystal-clear is equally the sign of penetrating vision'.

One should read the statements of the couple of dozen SED philosophers who have meanwhile tried, at the behest of the party, to pin down the errors and obscurities in Bloch's theories.[12] Apart from the misunderstandings, simplifications and misrepresentations that have crept in, the attempt to provide an answer to everything, to build a philosophy exclusively on scientifically exact foundations, results in an inextricable jumble of contradictory ideas which fundamentally has no meaning at all. Bloch has intentionally left many issues undecided because in his view the 'thing itself' has not yet emerged. Will it ever emerge? Bloch insists that his ultimate goal, heaven on earth, is attainable, that one day the inward will become outward and the outward inward. The ancient yearning for happiness will be fulfilled. This is, however, a theoretical conception and I doubt if he believes in it in the depths of his heart. He once wrote: 'The absolute co-incidence (of the real and the ideal) has rarely, probably never, occurred. In dreams, in the semi-waking state, things were or seemed to be better'. Bloch's goal for humanity hovers above the earth like a pole star, guiding and mathematically determinable but infinitely remote. It cannot be extinguished by the transient dark clouds of dictatorship.

FOR many years, owing to his delicate relationship with the SED, Bloch's philosophy was confined to the esoteric circle of his Leipzig pupils. It was only when the thaw set in that Bloch came before the public eye. In 1953 there appeared the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* (German Journal of Philosophy), edited by Bloch and Wolfgang Harich, with two other professors, to which he contributed in every number. In 1954 and 1955 there appeared the first two volumes of *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. In 1956 he delivered three great lectures on the renewal of Marxism, entitled 'Differentiations in the Concept of Progress', 'Freedom and Truth', and 'Hegel and the Power of the System'. At this period his lecture room in Leipzig, the largest in the Karl Marx University, was always overcrowded. Leading exponents of the Party ideology came under his spell, including the Central Committee Secretary Hager. With the whole weight of his personality and philosophy Ernst Bloch stepped into the breach made by the Twentieth CPSU Congress. Like his friend Georg Lukacs in Budapest, he did not attack Communism in general but only its perversion. He wanted to make it stronger, more convincing, more human—quite a revolution in itself! 'Now at last', he cried, to the tumultuous cheers of his audience, 'chess must be played, instead of draughts'.

When the *German Journal of Philosophy* began to appear in 1953, the year of the workers' revolt, and was immediately attacked by the Party, the *Berliner Zeitung*—at that time a mouthpiece of the opposition in the Soviet Zone—closed its notice of the Journal as follows (1 December, 1953):

[11] I, 174.

[12] *Ernst Blochs Revision des Marxismus* (East Berlin), 1957.

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'The *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* is a professional journal which seems to be inspired by a valiant spirit, versatility, and high standards of scholarship. Its ideological significance must not be underestimated—if it continues true to its motto from the writings of Engels' "The more persistently and impartially science proceeds, the more it will find itself in accord with the interests and aspirations of the workers".'

A few years later, this goal had been attained. In 1956/57 the SED regime, which in 1953 had been able to confine itself to suppressing the workers, found itself compelled to proceed against the philosophers with the same brutality. The State Security Service occupied the editorial offices of the Journal, seized the current manuscripts, and arrested the editorial staff. Of the well-known young philosophers of the Soviet Zone, Wolfgang Harich was sentenced to ten years penal servitude, Günther Zehm to four years, Manfred Hertwig, editorial secretary of the Journal, to two years. Bloch's pupils, Richard Lorenz and Gerhard Zwerenz fled from Leipzig to the Federal Republic. Ernst Bloch himself was discharged and forbidden to publish or travel; at the last moment his arrest, which had already been ordered by Melsheimer, the Public Prosecutor, was called off for political reasons.

In the official findings on the case, as recorded in a letter from the SED directorate of the University of Leipzig, which was instigated by Ulbricht, Bloch was accused of 'leading youth astray'. What an honour for a philosopher: it is literally the same charge that was made against Socrates.

THE steps taken by the police followed on an all-round campaign for a purge, personal and ideological, in the philosophy of the Eastern Zone. The editorial board of the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* was filled with Stalinists, and the process of correction went so far that all references to works by Bloch and Harich in the index to the periodical for 1956 were removed, an incident which recalled Orwell's 'memory hole'. Philosophical and social-science institutes were combed through for revisionists; the lecture programme and the publishing plans in the philosophy faculty were reorganised. The dispute with Bloch became the subject of discussions among the top party leaders, particularly at the thirtieth session of the SED Central Committee in January 1957, and at the thirty-third in the following October. Conferences to discuss theory were arranged in order to bring philosophy once more on to the party line: on Bloch's philosophy (April 1957), on theoretical and practical questions of socialist morality (April 1957), on the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state (April 1958), and on dialectical materialism (May 1958). The argument was carried on in the press, particularly in the SED central organ *Neues Deutschland*, the Communist student magazine *Forum*, and in the 'purged' *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*.

Despite this massive drumfire, Bloch uttered no word of self-criticism. At the thirty-third CC meeting Hager said of Bloch that 'it really is time to confront him with the demand that he break his silence, and state his position about the criticism and above all about the anti-state activities of his students. I think that is the only way to get the lines clear'.

Bloch let another six months pass before making a laconic and diplomatic profession of loyalty: 'At a time when the Bundestag is voting for atomic arms, while the Soviet Union declares its readiness to cease all atomic tests in its territory, I learn with great anger that the warmongers in West Germany, and not only there, are again trying to use my name to try to further their political ends. I emphatically dissociate myself from this. No philosophical controversy affects my allegiance to socialism, to peace, to German unity. And it is the German Democratic Republic on whose ground I stand, with whose humanist aspirations I agree, at the heart of which lies the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. Criticism can be honest only if it is exercised here on the soil of the Republic, and follows an unmistakably socialist road, and no other'.[13]

Obviously this declaration meets neither of Hager's demands. Bloch did not define his

[13] *Neues Deutschland*, 20 April 1958.

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attitude to the party's criticism of his philosophy, nor did he dissociate himself from his students. If you read the declaration slowly, sentence by sentence, it seems to consist entirely of implicit reservations. Bloch swears allegiance to socialism, to peace, to German unity, to the abolition of exploitation—but any democratic socialist in the West could subscribe to the same goals. Of the DDR he says, Solomon-wise, that he stands on its soil and agrees with its humanist aspirations. And for good measure he adds that he has a critical attitude towards this republic. The only thing in the statement favouring the regime is his assurance that he wants to stay in the DDR. And for that he has every good reason. Flight to the West for the 74-year old man would do him little good, and might well endanger his students who remain behind and put a blanket on any further discussion of his philosophy in the Eastern bloc.

It is a tribute to the authority this old and isolated man still enjoys that the SED pretended to be satisfied with this equivocal fragment of a loyalty oath and called off the campaign against him. In the autumn of 1958 he and his wife (who had been expelled from the SED early in 1957) were honoured as 'fighters against fascism' and at the end of October he was once more allowed to travel to the West to take part in the Congress of the Hegel Society in Frankfurt am Main. Exit visas were granted also on subsequent occasions.

Bloch seemed as little impressed by this clemency as he had been by earlier reprisals. When the Communist philosophers from the Soviet zone demonstratively walked out of the Hegel congress as a protest against the criticisms of Marx by Adorno, the Frankfurt sociologist, he remained seated. His name was missing from the signatures to the congratulatory address sent by the professors of the East Berlin Academy of Sciences to the government on the tenth anniversary of the DDR in October, 1959.

At the end of the year, to the general surprise, the third volume of *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* was published in the Soviet zone; it had been held up by the censor for nearly three years. It was published without any of the changes which the SED had so long and so stubbornly demanded, and which Bloch had equally stubbornly refused to make. This astonishing surrender by the dictatorship must have been prompted by the forthcoming appearance of the complete text of the work in the West (it was published in Frankfurt am Main in 1959). By permitting a small edition to be published in the zone, Ulbricht avoided the kind of scandal which the Soviet authorities have let themselves in for by their inflexible attitude towards Pasternak.

For Bloch himself the publication was a great triumph and a reward for his patient and diplomatic tactics. He had forced the SED to recognise the legitimacy of his philosophy.

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Between Marx and Lenin

GEORGE PLEKHANOV

Samuel Baron

THE life of G. V. Plekhanov (1856-1918), widely known as 'the father of Russian Marxism', spanned the eventful epoch from Russia's humiliating defeat in the Crimean War to the Bolshevik Revolution. The Crimean debacle, by highlighting the inadequacy of Russia's socio-economic system, called forth a series of innovations that took Russia across the great divide separating a traditional from a modern society. Hence Plekhanov confronted a different constellation of circumstances from that which had faced the radical intelligentsia in the age of Nicholas I. Sharing their abhorrence of Tsarist despotism, he dedicated his life, as they had done, to its destruction. But whereas they could find no point of support for achieving their ends in a serf-based society, he 'discovered' in a Russia undergoing capitalist development the social forces essential to the task. In contrast to his predecessors, who were inclined to liberal-democratic or 'utopian' socialist solutions, his experience of Russia's altered circumstances led him to advocate a Marxian programme.

In Plekhanov's person the best traditions of the Russian intelligentsia fused with the broader stream of European Marxism to produce both a vigorous political movement and a strikingly impressive intellectual output. Not without reason has he been regarded as the last in that line of great figures in the history of the Russian intelligentsia that began with Belinsky and Herzen. Russian writers of the most diverse political and philosophical orientations have agreed in characterizing him, in spite of his close identification with Marxism, as one of the most gifted, cultured, and influential men of his time. The liberal historian Kizevetter, for example, wrote of him: 'No disagreement with the socio-political views of G. V. Plekhanov can dim in anyone's eyes either the brilliant literary talent or the powerful and original mind and the many-sided erudition of this remarkable writer and great political figure'.[1] Moreover, he was one of the most sensitive and creative disciples of Marx. Not only did he produce incisive and persuasive analyses of contemporary Russian socio-political life, but he also pioneered in the extension of Marxian modes of investigation adn thought into literary criticism, the history of Russian social thought, and other fields of knowledge. His qualities won for him the admiration of Engels and Kautsky, not to mention lesser lights, and a leading place in the councils of the Second International.

A lifelong champion of the urban proletariat, Plekhanov was born and reared in a remote country village in Central Russia. This militant adversary of Tsarist autocracy was the scion of a landowning gentry family noted for its tradition of loyal service to the Russian state. Intending to make his career in the army, as had his father before him, Plekhanov enrolled in the Voronezh Military Academy at the age of ten By that time his father had succeeded in instilling in him those habits of discipline, industry, and self-reliance that he displayed all his life. From his mother he assimilated a love of learning, and a sense of altruism and devotion to justice. These latter qualities, confirmed and given sharper focus during his training at Voronezh, made him readily susceptible to the populist (*narodnik*) propaganda he encountered in the capital after his graduation. Contacts of that sort led him first to transfer from a Petersburg higher military school to the Mining Institute, and not long after to abandon completely his formal education. Determined to become a professional revolutionist, Plekhanov burned his bridges behind him in December 1876, by addressing an anti-government demonstration of workers and students on Kazan Square in the capital.

The next three years of Plekhanov's life were given to the populist organisation 'Land and Liberty' (*Zemlia i Volia*) in which, because of

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[1] *Golos Minuvshevo*, No. 1, 1916, 325.

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his devotion to the cause, his skill as an agitator, and the range of his knowledge, he quickly rose to a position of leadership. Twice during this period he was arrested, but on each occasion he managed to secure a speedy release. Although the chief target of the populists was the peasantry, his agitational endeavours chanced to centre upon the capital's factory workers, a circumstance of considerable importance for his ideological evolution. As an editor of the organisation's periodical publication, he demonstrated the originality of thought and felicity of expression that became the hallmarks of his writing. In 1879, Plekhanov's adamant stand in favour of populist orthodoxy as against the expansion of terrorist activities precipitated a schism in 'Land and Liberty'. He then became a leader of the ill-fated 'Black Repartition' (*Cherny Peredel*), which failed to compete successfully with the more dynamic terrorist group, 'The People's Will' (*Narodnaia Volia*).

EARLY in 1880, Plekhanov went abroad for what was intended to be a brief stay. He never returned to his native land until after the overthrow of the Imperial Government in 1917. He had already come to doubt certain of the foundation premises of populism, and hoped to find in the West the information that would buttress his position. Instead, his scholarly investigations and his experience of Western conditions gave him the perspective for a critique of populism and for a new insight into the nature of Russian reality. He became convinced that capitalism was already well-launched in Russia: that the populist dream of a peasant revolution leading directly to an anarcho-socialist order based on the village commune was a fantasy; that Russia's destiny lay not in any unique historical evolution but in following the course of development traversed by Western Europe. The doctrines of Marxism, accordingly, were no less applicable to Russia than to the West.

In 1883, Plekhanov and a few friends organised the 'Emancipation of Labour' group, dedicated to switching the Russian revolutionary movement on to Marxian tracks. In *Socialism and Political Struggle* (1883) and *Our Differences* (1885), he elaborated a Marxian analysis of Russian socio-economic life and from it deduced a revolutionary programme. In opposition to the populist programme, it called for an extended *political* struggle as the way to socialism, and it designated the industrial proletariat rather than the peasantry as the mass basis of the movement. In keeping with these views, Plekhanov advanced as the principal tasks of the infant group the spread of Marxian propaganda in Russia, and the drawing together of elements of a Russian workers party. The first objective of the party must be the conquest of political liberty.

For a decade the tiny 'Emancipation of Labour' group, based in Geneva, seemed to make little progress in attracting support either among Russian students in Switzerland or in Russia itself. Their ideas did gradually gain ground, however, and in the first half of the nineties led such notable figures as Lenin, Martov, Struve, and Potresov to embrace Marxism. In the next few years, the era of 'legal Marxism', the permissive attitude of the government enabled the new evangel to win a much broader following. Plekhanov made a notable contribution to this breakthrough, particularly with his book *On the Development of the Monistic Conception of History* which, according to Lenin, 'reared a whole generation of Russian Marxists' Meanwhile, in the nineties, the Russian labour movement had come to life and with the assistance of the social-democrats had carried off some well-disciplined and successful strikes. There then arose among the socialists a tendency ('economism') that counselled primary if not exclusive emphasis on economic rather than political struggle, an emphasis which, it was alleged, corresponded to the spontaneous development of proletarian consciousness. About the same time, Bernstein launched his revisionist theses upon the socialist world. Plekhanov discerned a kinship between these two 'heresies', and unleashed a whole series of scathing polemics against them.[2] Almost the first to sound the tocsin against Revisionism, he proved himself a very paragon of Marxian orthodoxy in these battles.

In 1900, Plekhanov and his associates in 'Emancipation of Labour' (Axelrod and Vera

[2] These writings are to be found in his *Sochineniia*, XI, XII.

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Zasulich) joined with Lenin, Martov, and Potresov in the publication of the newspaper *Iskra*. Their collaboration had as its purpose the defence of Marxian orthodoxy and the organisational preparation essential to unite the many social-democratic groups into an all-Russian party. As they put together a draft programme for the party, sharp differences between Plekhanov and Lenin emerged, especially with respect to the agrarian programme. The publication of Lenin's *What is to be Done?* in 1902 had brought no protest from Plekhanov; nor did the organisational question divide the two, either in the programme discussions or at the 1903 party congress. Moreover, the congress that split the party into Bolshevik and Menshevik factions found Plekhanov siding with Lenin against Martov, Zasulich, and Axelrod. The strain of Jacobinism in him was in the ascendant for the moment, and probably he did not yet fully comprehend the implications of Lenin's organisational views. But shortly after the congress he rejoined his old friends, and in a series of critical articles brought under examination the assumptions and the dictatorial tendency in Lenin's position.

In the last two decades of his life, Plekhanov was increasingly absorbed in artistic, literary, and historical studies. He by no means retired from political life, however, a proposition underscored by his vigorous reaction to the great events of the period—the two wars and the two revolutions that grew out of them. As an expression of his 'defeatist' attitude towards the Russo-Japanese War, he demonstratively shook hands with the Japanese delegate to the Congress of the International in 1904. In contrast, he adopted a 'defencist' position during the World War; in his view the victory of German militarism—which he believed had precipitated the conflict—would spell disaster for the progressive movement not only in Russia but in all of Europe.[3]

Apart from his stand on the two wars, there existed a high degree of correspondence between Plekhanov's general line in 1905 and in 1917. The year 1905 may be taken as the testing-time for the revolutionary prognosis Plekhanov worked out in the 1880's. The bourgeoisie, upon which he had counted heavily in the revolution against absolutism, did not live up to expectations. The peasantry, whose role Plekhanov always tended to under-estimate once he became a Marxist, proved itself a potent revolutionary force. Nevertheless, this experience did not cause him to modify his revolutionary theory in any fundamental respect.

After 1905, Plekhanov remained relatively free of close organisational ties. Combating both the 'revolutionary adventurism' of the Bolsheviks and the 'liquidationist' tendency among the Mensheviks, he sought in vain to bring about a reunification of the party on the line he advocated. In 1917, he greeted the March upheaval as the long-awaited first revolution. Returning to Russia soon after, he urged continuation of the war to victory in defence of the newly-won political liberty. Though the precedent of the French Revolution was always in his mind, Plekhanov forgot what Professor Namier has cogently remarked, that 'in 1792 war broke out in the third year of the revolution, while in 1917 revolution broke out in the third year of the war.'[4] The peasant-soldiers heeded his exhortations no more than did the workers and peasants his plea that it was folly in the midst of a life-and-death struggle with a foreign enemy to press class warfare. Theoretical considerations concerning historically attainable goals made no impression on a populace hungry for 'peace, land, and bread'. Plekhanov was impotent to stop the Bolshevik march to power. He could take little consolation from his certainty that the Russian people would have to pay dearly for the recklessness of the Bolsheviks. As if his cup of bitterness were not already full, in the last months of his life ignorant and overzealous Red Guards harassed the ailing Plekhanov—who had given thirty-five years to the cause of the Russian proletariat—as 'an enemy of the people'.

PLEKHANOV may well have been one of the keenest observers of the social and political life of his time. Still, in retrospect, we can see that he committed extremely grave

[3] His position is fully elaborated in *O Voine* (2nd ed.; Petrograd, n.d.)

[4] 'History and Political Culture', in *The Varieties of History*, ed. F. Stern (New York, 1956). p. 377.

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errors of judgment. Paradoxical though it may seem, if much of Plekhanov's power derived from his sensitive employment of Marxian ideas in analysis, his failures are traceable to the excessive rigour of his Marxian orthodoxy on programmatic and tactical matters. For in the two decades prior to the World War, that orthodoxy was becoming less and less appropriate to the changing societies of Europe. The clearest symptoms were the rise and triumph of Revisionism in the West and of Bolshevism in Russia. Plekhanov relentlessly combated the one and the other under the banner of orthodoxy and lost both battles.

In bringing Marxism to Russia, Plekhanov succeeded in illuminating certain aspects of its social life that had until then remained in the shade. He proved, what was indubitably the case, that capitalism had penetrated Russia, had dislodged it from its former stability, and had undermined the peasant commune upon which the populists rested their hopes. Eschewing that subjectivism in regard to means and ends which he identified as the earmark of populism and every other brand of utopianism, he sought instead to harmonise revolutionary goals and strategy with the objective historical process which in his view established the limits of rational social action. In Russia, the level of economic development (ultimately the limiting factor), and hence the social structure and the mental disposition of the people, precluded the possibility of socialism for the time being. Accordingly, Plekhanov took upon himself the difficult task of devising a programme for a socialist movement in a country admittedly far from ready for socialism.

It may be inferred that his model for the future historical development of Russia was based upon the French Revolution of 1789 and the experience of the Social-Democratic Party of Imperial Germany. Reasoning by analogy, on the basis of the development of capitalism in Russia, he projected a 'bourgeois' revolution. The rise of capitalism brought into being the bourgeoisie and proletariat which, acting in concert, would overthrow absolutism as in the West, substituting for it a bourgeois-constitutional government and civil liberty. It is important to note that, in his opinion, 'the people' and not the bourgeoisie had struck the *decisive* blow against absolutism in the Western 'bourgeois' revolutions; and, as far as Russia was concerned, he declared again and again: 'political freedom will be won by the working class or not at all'.[5] In the bourgeois regime the proletariat, organised in the social-democratic party, was to acquire the political experience indispensable to its future governing role. Meanwhile, gathering strength as capitalism developed further, the proletariat ultimately would secure the political preponderance that would enable it to inaugurate the socialist order.

In all of this, Plekhanov tacitly admitted a fundamental similarity between the historical destiny of Russia and the West. But he was too perceptive not to realise that there also existed important differences. Anticipating Lenin's 'law of uneven development', he introduced certain modifications that took account of these differences. Most significant was his attempt to establish an organic connection between the socialist revolution and the 'bourgeois' revolution which must precede it, and from which he believed it would be separated by a more or less extended interval. The connecting link he envisaged was proletarian class-consciousness; it should be awakened at the earliest possible moment and continuously increased in breadth and depth up to the achievement of socialism.

As he saw it, Russia's peculiarity consisted in the belated emergence of the movement against absolutism—a consequence of its economic backwardness. Owing to the diffusion of ideas from West to East, socialists were already active in Russia even before that movement was well under way. The socialists rather than the bourgeois liberals must summon the workers to the struggle for political liberty, thus guaranteeing their participation as a *class-conscious* force, bent on advancing its own demands. Fighting alongside the bourgeoisie against absolutism, the workers nevertheless would be under no illusions about the relation of their interests to those of their temporary comrades-in-arms. They would view the revolution not as an end in itself but as the means of acquiring the rights which would permit them better to defend

[5] He made this resounding claim at the founding congress of the Second International in 1889.

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their interests against the bourgeoisie and more freely and effectively to pursue their ultimate goal of socialism.[6]

Plekhanov strove to introduce an amendment advantageous to the socialists into a Russian historical evolution he believed would be basically similar to that of the West. He could hardly have done otherwise once he decided upon a Marxian programme for a retarded country such as Russia. But he failed to appreciate that his modification threatened to disrupt the orderly Marxian sequence of economically-determined, historical stages. The locus of contradiction was his concept of class-consciousness. It comprised: (1) a realistic appraisal of the role and status of the class in existing society; (2) a correct diagnosis of its real interests and the tactics proper to their realisation; and (3) the formulation of goals in full recognition of the limits imposed upon action by the existing level of historical, and especially economic, development. To expect any mass group to assimilate and to be guided by such a set of principles, to be capable of such a comprehensive sociological and historical sensitivity, required the kind of confidence which only a faith in historical inevitability could give.

The achievement of proletarian class-consciousness, insofar as it involved a grasp of the antagonism of interests between bourgeoisie and proletariat, lay well within the realm of the possible. But if that were achieved, then could such a class-conscious proletariat be expected to strike the decisive blow against absolutism, as Plekhanov thought, and then to agree to yield political predominance to that bourgeoisie it had learned to identify as its class enemy? Was a mass group, especially amid the passion and confusion of a revolution, likely to take as the controlling principle of its action an abstract historical scheme? Besides, might not the bourgeoisie shrink from collaboration in the struggle against absolutism with a proletariat which openly avowed its intention presently to destroy bourgeois society? Might not its own class consciousness counsel different policies than those its opponents, the social-democrats, prescribed for it?

Plekhanov did not realise that his proposed 'improvement' on the history of the West could not be implemented without, at the same time, causing a series of compensatory adjustments that would make the outcome radically different than what had transpired in the West. Having anticipated the 'law of uneven development', he failed to deduce the corollary 'law of combined development' which projected, as the consequence of unevenness, a different historical destiny for backward countries, including even the skipping of whole historical stages. Plekhanov recoiled from deducing any such 'law' because for him the sequence of economically-determined historical stages figured as the ultimate and inviolable framework of action; he could not conceive of a successful revolution which violated that 'law of history'.

WHAT was initially an undetected theoretical inconsistency in Plekhanov's system became in 1905, and much more so in 1917, a critical political issue. In 1905, he saw the bourgeoisie retire from the revolutionary coalition before Tsarism had been struck a decisive blow. It declined to play the role for which he had cast it. On the other hand, among the workers the Bolsheviks won substantial support for a proletarian policy of alliance with the peasantry against Tsarism and, in effect, against the bourgeoisie as well. Yet Plekhanov refused to admit that the events of 1905 necessitated any fundamental change in the architecture of his revolutionary system. In 1917, although displeased with certain policies of the Provisional Government, he defended it ardently against Lenin's campaign for its overthrow. Again and again, he reminded all who would listen of Marx's dictum that no economic formation passes from the historical stage (i.e., capitalism from Russia) until it had exhausted its potential for development. Again and again, in his articles and speeches,[7] he recalled Engels' strictures against a premature seizure of power as the worst possible thing for the interests of the working class. Again and again, as in 1905, he labelled Lenin and his followers Blanquists and Tkachevists, 'alchemists of revolution', who

[6] The elements of this strategy were first set out in his *Socialism and Political Struggle* and *Our Differences.* These works are included in *Sochineniia,* II.

[7] They are collected in *God na Rodine* (Paris, 1921), 2 vols.

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sought to achieve a socialist revolution when the necessary conditions for it were wanting.

In 1917, Plekhanov and his ideas were defeated in the arena of political power. But years before, with remarkable prescience, he had set forth a series of judgments foretelling much of what happened in Russia after 1917. On the very threshold of his Marxian career, he gave warning of the possibility that a revolutionary committee might seize power and elect to retain it even though recognising the divergence between the people's aims and its own socialist objectives. It might then attempt to organise national production along socialist lines, in the absence of both the objective conditions for and popular approval of socialisation. In that case, 'it would have to seek salvation in the ideals of "patriarchal and authoritarian communism," introducing into those ideals only the change that a socialist caste would manage the national production instead of the Peruvian "sons of the sun" and their officials'.[8] In this, as in the following passage, he decried policies that might lead to a restoration of 'oriental despotism', the term by which he designated the system of oppression Russia had borne for centuries.

Attacking Lenin's organisational plans in 1904, months before Trotsky's critique, which has been much more widely publicised in recent times, Plekhanov remarked:

> Imagine that the Central Committee recognised by us all possessed the still-debated right of 'liquidation'. Then this would happen. Since a congress is in the offing, the C.C. everywhere 'liquidates' the elements with which it is dissatisfied, everywhere seats its own creatures and, filling all the committees with these creatures, without difficulty guarantees itself a fully submissive majority at the congress. The congress constituted of the creatures of the C.C. amiably cries 'Hurrah!', approves all its successful and unsuccessful actions, and applauds all its plans and initiatives. Then, in reality, there would be in the party neither a majority nor a minority, because we would then have realised the ideal of the Persian Shah.[9]

He went on to remind the social-democrats that theirs was 'the party of the conscious, growing and developing proletariat [i.e., a popular and democratically-organised party]', in contrast to the conception of the Bolsheviks who 'evidently confuse the dictatorship of the proletariat with a dictatorship over the proletariat'. Desiring the attainment among the masses of the highest possible degree of political awareness and sensitivity, he had in 1885 written lines that could be read as an indictment of contemporary Soviet society: 'And even if there came into being a state which—without giving you political rights—wanted to and could guarantee your material welfare, in that case [should you accept that situation], you would be nothing more than "*satiated slaves, well-fed working cattle*".'[10]

To those who saw in Lenin the offspring of Plekhanov, he objected that if the Bolshevik leader qualified for the description then he was at best an illegitimate son. At the very last, however, Plekhanov seems to have grasped the inner connection between his own revolutionary system and the Bolshevik Revolution. According to Leo Deutsch, a comrade who spent many hours with 'the father of Russian Marxism' in his declining days, Plekhanov repeatedly put to him the question 'that deeply tormented him: "Did we not begin the propaganda of Marxism too early in backward, semi-Asiatic Russia?" '[11] In the end, he appears to have understood that he could not be absolved from responsibility for what had happened, which in fact flowed logically from his insistence upon the vital link between the Russian bourgeois and socialist revolutions. As for Lenin and Trotsky, in the 1920's they inadvertently admitted their error in having forced the pace of history. Acknowledging in effect that Plekhanov's warnings had been valid, countless times they inveighed against Russia's 'peasant barbarism', which at every turn impeded and thwarted the advance towards that socialist society which was to have been the most rational, the freest, and the most abundant in human history.

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[8] *Sochineniia*, II, 81.

[9] *Sochineniia*, XIII, 90.

[10] *Ibid.*, II, 365-6.

[11] Quoted by E. Kuskova, 'Davno Minuvshee', *Novy Zhurnal*, LIV (1958), 139.

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I SUGGESTED earlier that Plekhanov's image of Russian historical development in the post-absolutist regime was strongly coloured by his knowledge of the Social-Democratic Party's experience (perhaps to 1890) in Imperial Germany. To be sure, he expected Tsarism to give way to a democratic political order rather than to the kind of pseudo-parliamentary system represented by Bismarck's Germany. If it had, the Russian socialists could have gone about their business in greater security and freedom than their German counterparts. But if a revisionist tendency arose and ultimately triumphed in German socialism, then the likelihood of the same occurring in Russian socialism would have been all the greater. Plekhanov fought resolutely for the suppresssion of revisionism in Western socialism, but to no avail. There is no reason to believe he would have been more successful in Russia, if the bourgeois-democratic regime he anticipated had materialised. Once again, his inflated expectations regarding proletarian class-consciousness proved to be his Achilles heel.

Plekhanov envisaged under a Russian bourgeois-democratic regime, a social-democratic party embracing the largest possible number of workers, engaging in political campaigns and parliamentary activities, fostering the growth of trade unions, and maintaining close contact between party and labour organisations. He frankly stated the desirability of social reforms, recalling for example Marx's enthusiasm about the winning of the ten-hour day for the British workers. He clearly recognised the possibility of securing favourable social legislation and other improvements for the proletariat under conditions of political democracy. Nevertheless, he staunchly denied that these circumstances necessarily militated against the maintenance and increase of proletarian class-consciousness, so long as society remained divided into classes.

His trenchant critique cast doubt on the contention of the revisionists that wealth was becoming more widely diffused, and economic depressions less frequent and less disruptive. On the other hand, he tended to minimise the importance of factory legislation and the progressive income tax in altering class relationships under capitalism. His central thesis was that, in proportion as capitalism develops, 'the position of the worker worsens relatively, even though his material situation improves in the absolute sense'. Even if, as a consequence of militant struggle, the proletarian worked shorter hours and received higher pay, he was exploited more heavily than before, Plekhanov insisted, since the gains he made were less than proportional to the increase in his productivity.

> The proletariat is in the position of a person who is swimming against a powerful current; if he submits without resistance to the force of the water, he would be carried *very* far back; but he does resist; he tries to move forward and therefore the current pushes him back *not so far* as it *might;* but *nevertheless* it did *move him back,* because all the same *it was much stronger.*[12]

Considerations of this sort, he reasoned, provided the basis for the persistence and augmentation of proletarian class-consciousness. So long as the workers understood the situation, so long as they obtained every improvement through class struggle rather than class collaboration, so long as the socialists kept before them the ultimate goal of the labour movement, the requisite élan would not flag.

While holding this view, Plekhanov was not unaware of the existence of 'opportunism' in the German labour movement. 'Opportunism' signified the pursuit of immediate gains by any means including class collaboration, with the attendant implication that the ultimate aims of socialism were lost sight of or even deliberately written off. The rise of opportunism came in response to the new status labour was achieving in a socio-political context quite different from that in which Marx had written the *Communist Manifesto.* The sense of having progressed by more or less peaceful means led the working class to favour evolutionism over revolutionism as the path to continued advancement. For the worker it was of relatively little concern whether the improvement in his conditions was relative as well as absolute. Plekhanov's dramatic figure of the man swimming against the current could make little impression upon people who knew, from direct experience, that they had gained ground. Having gained it by

[12] *Sochineniia,* XI, 220.

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certain tried and proven methods, they were reluctant to leave the known and successful for the unknown. The trade unions, with their bureaucratic organisation and substantial funds and property, became the particular stronghold of opportunism and reformism.

As in the Russian case, empirical considerations took precedence for the proletariat over the abstract arguments of theoreticians for whom doctrinal dicta were binding. On occasion, Plekhanov exhibited a degree of tolerance for opportunism in the labour movement; but he never tired of castigating the revisionist intellectuals who, he declared, had betrayed Marxism. He was blind to the fact that their theories merely reflected a changed set of conditions and a changed mentality among the proletariat. He evaded the issue by asserting that basically nothing had changed. The leadership of the German party could not evade the issue because of the pressure of the trade unions, which bulked increasingly large in the party. To be sure, the orthodox faction appeared for a time to have retained the upper hand; but subsequent developments made clear that revisionism had in fact come to dominate German Social-Democracy.

PLEKHANOV'S life ended in tragedy. The events of the first two decades of the 20th century, the triumph of revisionism in the most advanced countries and the triumph of Bolshevism in backward Russia, sounded the death knell for that orthodox Marxism of which he was one of the two or three leading exponents in the Second International. When, in 1914, the Social-Democratic Party supported Imperial Germany's war policy, a whole set of his cherished convictions collapsed. His own 'defencist' position had the effect of isolating him from the main currents of popular sentiment when at long last Tsarism was overthrown in 1917. The October Revolution constituted an irreparable blow to that scheme of Russian historical development in which he had implicitly believed for almost four decades.

In Soviet Russia, particularly in the Stalinist era, Plekhanov and much of his work were either condemned or simply neglected. The apotheosis of Lenin and the attribution to him of virtually all the ideological and organisational attainments of Russian Marxism contributed even more effectively to the same end. Thanks to Lenin's endorsement of them as 'obligatory textbooks of communism',[13] Plekhanov's philosophical works have fared better in the Soviet Union than his other writings. It would hardly have accorded with the spirit of Stalin's Russia to pay homage to a man who saw in the Westernisation of his country the highroad to progress; who viewed Lenin's revolutionary innovations and the Bolshevik seizure of power as a perversion rather than a fulfilment of Marxism; who insisted on the primacy of aesthetic quality over ideology in art; and who, in the last years of his life, adopted as his own Kant's dictum that the individual must always be considered as an end in himself, never as a means.

Bibliographical Note

Except for his writings on the World War (*O Voine* and his articles in *Prizyv*) and of 1917 (collected in the two volumes of *God na Rodine*), almost all of Plekhanov's works are included in his *Sochineniia*. Available in English, and providing an introduction to his philosophical and literary-artistic views respectively are *In Defence of Materialism* (London, 1947), and *Art and Social Life* (London, 1953). The first is an abbreviated title for his celebrated *On the Development of the Monistic Conception of History*. The long and stimulating introduction to his three-volume *History of Russian Social Thought* has been translated into French. Articles on Plekhanov by the present writer can be found in *The Russian Review*, January 1954; *American Slavic and East European Review*, December 1953, October 1955, April 1957; *Journal of the History of Ideas*, June 1958.

[13] This is why his philosophical works, almost alone of the vast corpus of his writings, are available in English. Only now, over thirty years after the appearance of the first edition of his collected works, is a second edition being prepared in the USSR. The biographies of Plekhanov by V. Vaganian (Moscow, 1924) and S. Volfson (Minsk, 1924), were long ago relegated to oblivion in the USSR because, from the Soviet point of view, they did not judge their subject sufficiently harshly.

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M. N. ROY: THE REVOLUTION IN ASIA

Robert C. North

THIS was the summer of 1920, and revolutionaries from all over the world had begun to converge on Petrograd for the opening of the Second Congress of the Communist International. The famous old Smolny Institute, formerly a school for daughters of the nobility, now held the offices of various commissars, and it was there that leading Russian Bolsheviks welcomed the delegates. As soon as the ceremony was over, a great crowd marched in procession to the Uritsky Theatre, where only delegates and spectators with special tickets were granted admittance. Despite precautions, the place was packed with people sitting on the floor and jamming every corner and passageway.

There, near the front, sat a tall, brown-skinned delegate, M. N. Roy, from India. Represented also were China, Korea, Turkey, Persia, the Dutch East Indies and more than thirty other states and dependencies. Throughout 1918 and 1919 Russian Communist leaders had expected post-war unrest in central Europe to explode into a general revolution, but in Germany, Hungary, and Austria newly-formed workers and soldiers soviets had met early defeat. By the opening of the Second Congress the Bolsheviks were looking hopefully towards possibilities for revolution in other quarters.

Lenin himself now mounted the rostrum to analyse the international situation. By 1914, he said, more than 600 million people had fallen subject to colonial rule, while another 400 million in Persia, Turkey, and China had been reduced to semi-colonial status. Indeed, the Great War, according to Lenin, had grown directly out of this division of the world among the imperialist powers, who had come to blows over which of the two great groups was to enjoy the right of robbing, exploiting, and crushing the rest of the world.

During subsequent sessions of the Congress, which were held in Moscow, the delegates discussed at considerable length the political strategy and tactics which Communists ought to follow in the encouragement of revolution in the colonial and dependent—as distinct from the western capitalist—nations. The outcome of these discussions was the adoption of the 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions', which presented Lenin's views modified by proposals introduced by M. N. Roy in his 'Supplementary Theses'.

According to Lenin, the Communist International 'must be ready to establish temporary relationships and even alliances with the bourgeois democracy of the colonies and backward countries. It must not, however, amalgamate with it'. In contrast, while Roy agreed that 'it would be profitable to make use of the co-operation of the bourgeois national-revolutionary elements', he insisted that the Communist International and its constituent parties must struggle against any bourgeois control over the workers and peasants and must make every effort to develop the class consciousness of the working masses.

The difference between the two points of view was only a matter of emphasis, but it was sufficient to confuse the issue in Communist minds and to hamper the Comintern in seeking to exploit the revolutions of Asia.

AT the time of the Second Congress M. N. Roy was barely thirty-three years old, but he had already served more than fifteen years as an anti-British revolutionary. He had been still in his teens when British intelligence agents first took note of his activities, and police from India and Southeast Asia all the way to China, Japan, and the United States were familiar with his movements. Prior to his arrival in Moscow, he had been operating in Berlin—and before that in Mexico City where Borodin, the Comintern agent, had won him over to Communism. Now the new convert stood face to face with Lenin and boldly challenged the views of Bolshevism's most seasoned strategist and theoretician. 'Two distinct movements which grow

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farther apart each day', Roy declared, 'are to be found in the dependent countries. One is the bourgeois democratic movement, with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order. The other is the mass struggle of the poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from the various forms of exploitation'.

In order to overthrow foreign capitalism, he argued, it would be profitable to make use of the co-operation of the bourgeois nationalist elements—but only in the initial stages and with circumspection. The foremost task was to form Communist parties in the dependent areas which would organise the peasants and workers and lead them to revolution and to the establishment of soviet republics.

Beyond this, Roy contended also that the revolutionary movement in Europe was absolutely dependent upon the course of the revolution in Asia. Super-profits extracted from the colonies were the mainstay of modern capitalism. 'Without control of the extensive markets and vast areas for exploitation in the colonies', he told the Second Congress, 'the capitalist powers of Europe would not be able to exist even for a short time'.

Lenin took strong exception to parts of Roy's thesis. Drawing on his own experience, he reminded the delegates that the Russian Bolsheviks had supported liberal liberation movements against tsarism. Similarly, the Indian Communists were 'in duty bound' to support 'bourgeois liberation movements' without in any sense merging with them. Roy, moreover, had gone too far in declaring that the destiny of revolutionary forces in the West would depend decisively upon the strength of the mass revolutionary movement in Asia.

After considerable debate the Second Congress sought to resolve the argument by approving both theses. While collaborating with middle-class nationalists in the colonies and semi-colonies, Communist leaders were expected to make every effort to arouse and organise the working masses and to penetrate and gain leadership over existing revolutionary movements.

Over the ensuing half-dozen years, with headquarters first in Berlin and later in Paris, Roy developed his concepts for revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies around four central themes: (1) the absolute necessity for ensuring that leadership for each stage of the revolution should rest at all times with a Communist vanguard; (2) the usefulness of limited, tactical, and strictly controlled Communist co-operation with essentially hostile bourgeois democratic revolutionaries during early stages; (3) recognition of the wavering tendencies of the petty-bourgeoisie who, as an exploited class in the colonies and semi-colonies, shared with the peasantry and the proletariat certain interests which they did not at first perceive—but which, under Communist leadership, they could be brought to see; and (4) the necessity, during the initial revolutionary stages, of a Communist-led non-capitalist programme of development encompassing many 'petty-bourgeois capitalist reforms' such as the nationalisation of transport and public utilities, the division of land among the peasants, and so forth.

IN seeking to implement these concepts over the years, however, the Bengali revolutionary—through the lessons of experience and the irresistible pressure of his own reasoning—gradually worked his way out of Bolshevik doctrine and spent the latter part of his life searching for other explanations of Asia's crises and other solutions for Asia's problems.

Undoubtedly it was Roy's Indian background and his assessment of the independence movement in India that shaped his concepts of Asian class struggle. An important basis for his distrust of the bourgeoisie, for example, seems to have emerged from his perception of a significant shift in British policies—and his perception, also, of how the Indian bourgeoisie had responded to this shift.

Great Britain, unable to keep Indian markets supplied with manufactured goods during World War I, had reversed its traditional policy of keeping India industrially backward, thus bringing the Indian bourgeoisie 'into its confidence', and presenting Indian capital with a free field of development. The British Government in 1916 had even gone to the length of appointing an Indian Industrial Commission in order to encourage industry in the country,

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and in consequence, by war's end, the Indian capitalist class had achieved such an economic security that the Government could no longer ignore bourgeois political demands, and in due course these were largely met by the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. 'The object behind this remarkable change of policy on the part of British imperialism', Roy asserted, 'was to split the revolutionary movement by making it clear to the bourgeoisie that it was no longer impossible for to realise its ambitions under British rule'.

This turn of policy did not ensure that the bourgeoisie would be won over. On the contrary, 'The more the British Government makes concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie', Roy maintained, 'the more ambitious the latter becomes. It knows quite well that it is necessary to make compromises with the Imperial capital, till the time comes when it will be in a position to contend openly for the right of monopoly of exploitation with the foreigner. But it also knows that British imperialism cannot be overthrown without the help of the masses'.

The bourgeoisie would deliberately deceive the masses, Roy believed, in order to capture their support and secure aggrandisement, and would seek to draw them into the National Congress. Still unaware of their own purposes, the masses would follow, for a time, but would not remain forever a reliable force behind the political manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie. 'The overthrow of the British rule will be achieved by the joint action of the bourgeoisie and the masses', asserted Roy, thus revealing his position as only a hairsbreadth—a crucial hairsbreadth—from Lenin's, 'but how this joint action can be consummated still remains a question. It will be easier to solve this problem when the condition of the masses is analysed, in order to understand what a great gulf divides these two revolutionary factors'. In the long run the divorce of the masses from bourgeois leadership was inevitable; bourgeois nationalism would end in a compromise with Imperial supremacy, and the liberation of India would be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants—'consciously organised and fighting on the ground of class-struggle'.

Between 1922 and the convening of the Sixth Congress in 1928 Roy from time to time revised his assessments of bourgeois relationships with the British and with the Indian masses, but the main line of his argument did not change. Paradoxically, the logic of it eventually drove him from the Communist movement.

At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922, for example, Roy maintained that financial dislocations in Europe were forcing imperialism to look for new markets by which the equilibrium of world capitalism could be re-established. Western European capitalists hoped to achieve this new economic balance by promoting industrialisation in countries like India and China.

In the beginning, Roy conceded, the various revolutionary upheavals in Asian countries had been a spontaneous reaction to intensified economic exploitation by Western imperialists. Now the national bourgeoisie, however, with increased industrialisation and opportunities for profit, were withdrawing their support of national revolutionary movements and seeking imperialist protection. As a consequence, Roy declared, 'The national revolutionary movement in these countries . . . is not going to be successful under the leadership of the bourgeoisie . . . It is only under the leadership of a political party representing the workers and peasants that the national revolutionary struggle can come to final victory in these countries'.

The Fourth Congress supported Roy's analysis: 'The dominant classes in the colonies and the semi-colonial countries are unable and unwilling to lead the struggle against imperialism as this struggle is converted into a revolutionary mass movement'. Yet the contradiction, so evident at the Second Congress, still plagued the Comintern. For the Fourth Congress, while upholding Roy's argument, was at the same time making plans for tactical co-operation in China with Sun Yat-sen's middle-class Kuomintang. How could these two antagonistic attitudes be reconciled? And how was a Communist tactician to foresee the precise moment when the essentially hostile national bourgeoisie would expend the last of its revolutionary potentialities and go over to the reaction?

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ADDRESSING the Fifth Congress in 1924, Roy asserted that in India, where national capitalism was growing rapidly, the national bourgeoisie had already been won over to support the Empire. 'Because the Indian bourgeoisie knows better than anybody else that the discontent of the masses is economic and not nationalist', he said, 'the exploiting class in India demands protection from the exploited. Indian capitalism is running straight into the arms of British imperialism, and the same tendency will soon be seen in other countries'.

By 1926 Roy was convinced that bourgeois nationalism had ended in a complete compromise with imperialism in India. The deepening schism between the national bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie had split the Swaraj, or Home Rule Party, which previously had served as a bridge between the constitutionalism of the big bourgeoisie and the revolutionary inclinations of the petty-bourgeoisie. 'The split in the Swaraj Party', he declared, 'means the burning of that bridge'. The last obstacle to an agreeable compromise between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie had been successfully removed. The British policy of industrialisation was allowing Indian capitalism to grow—within certain limits.

How then, in view of his distrust of the nationalist bourgeoisie, did Roy conceive that the revolutionary movement could be furthered in India?

In 1923, when he was operating in Berlin, Roy had written to comrades in India about forming a 'party of workers and peasants', and later he developed this scheme to encompass the establishment of a nationalist People's Party, which would attract members from a broader class base, but would contain a 'Communist Party inside it'. Similarly, in a letter written towards the end of November 1926, the Foreign Bureau of the Indian Communist Party, of which Roy was a member, recommended the organisation of an illegal Communist faction inside a legal Workers and Peasants Party. According to Roy's plan the Workers and Peasants Party would include left-wing elements of the petty-bourgeoisie—always, in Communist theory, a vacillating class—which had rejected nationalist bourgeois leadership; the object was 'gradually to develop the W. and P. P. into the real Communist Party by means of ideological education and political training connected with action'. The Workers and Peasants Party, in due course, would enter a more broadly based nationalist People's Party.

If Roy had remained in his European headquarters, or in Moscow, or if he had returned to India at this juncture, the whole course of events might have taken a different turn; but towards the end of 1926 he was sent by Stalin to China, where the Comintern was confronted by extraordinary difficulties in maintaining its alliance with the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang.

Roy was to help straighten matters out. After reaching Vladivostok via the Trans-Siberian Railway, he boarded a special Soviet ship which by-passed Shanghai—where he was wanted by the British police—and took him directly to Canton. There an aeroplane had been assigned him for the trip to Hankow, where the Kuomintang government and Borodin's mission had their headquarters, but the motor had broken down and the journey had to be made overland by train and palanquin.

Roy had first seen China in 1916 when, on the advice of Sun Yat-sen, he had conferred with the German ambassador about the purchase of arms for an uprising in India. Now China itself was in the grip of armed revolution, and as the bearers carried him through one small village after another he saw peasant soldiers hanging from the trees, the consequence of their participation in the struggle.

By the time Roy and his party reached Hankow Chiang Kai-shek was already on his way over 'to the camp of the imperialists', and only the left wing—the *petty-bourgeois* left wing—of the Kuomintang remained in alliance with the Comintern.

At this juncture Roy's third central concept —his assumption that the petty-bourgeoisie, as an exploited class, could be brought to recognise their common interests with the peasantry and the proletariat—led him and the whole Chinese Communist movement into serious difficulties.

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Borodin and other Comintern representatives in China, Roy felt, had grievously overestimated the big bourgeoisie associated with Chiang Kai-shek and had under-estimated the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, small merchants, and professional people. The crucial task was to mould the left-wing Kuomintang government, now established in Wuhan, into a revolutionary democratic anti-imperialist regime based on a bloc of three classes—the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the proletariat—under proletarian 'hegemony'.

It was Roy's belief that such a three-bloc revolutionary regime in China—by agrarian reform, and the nationalisation of heavy industry, transport, and public utilities under Communist supervision—could initiate a phase of non-capitalist development which would telescope the dialectical process and prepare the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for socialism. During this period of non-capitalist development, he maintained, the state would continue to uphold private property to an extent sufficient to support the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and also certain 'capitalist methods' of organisation and production, but would not permit capitalist exploitation of people. Thus the possibilities for limited capitalist development would be maintained for a time, and the class struggle would continue under the vigilant hegemony of the proletariat. The opposing bloc of foreign imperialists, Chinese militarists, Chinese big bourgeoisie and Chinese feudal remnants would provide the threat which would give the revolutionary coalition cohesive force and thus hold the 'bloc of three classes' together.

THE chief obstacle to this policy was the fact that the Chinese Communist Party, having no army of its own, was dependent upon Kuomintang forces which had been armed and to a considerable degree trained by the Russians, but which remained under the command of 'unreliable' generals; most of the officers were regarded by the Communists as feudal militarists, or allies of the big bourgeoisie. The problem was how to achieve Communist control over these armies.

Borodin's inclination had been to preserve relations with the generals at almost any cost, and it was this policy which had induced him to cling to Chiang Kai-shek almost to the moment of the latter's *coup* against the Communists. Now Roy urged the proclamation of a radical agrarian programme and the encouragement of peasant revolution in the countryside as a means of winning the rank and file of the Kuomintang armies—most of them landless peasants—away from the 'militarists' and over to Communism. Only an agrarian revolution, he believed, would turn the trick, and that meant nationalisation of the land, confiscation of large estates, and the promise of distribution among the poor peasantry.

It was Roy's estimate of the petty-bourgeoisie that turned out to be the fatal flaw in his reasoning. Perceiving that the members of this class were almost universally 'exploited' by the big bourgeoisie, and that many of the small merchants depended upon the peasantry for produce and markets, he assumed that the leaders of the Kuomintang left wing would be compelled to acquiesce in an agrarian revolution.

Events soon revealed, however, that these leaders were no more enthusiastic about peasant revolution or 'proletarian hegemony' than Chiang Kai-shek had been. Most of the Kuomintang political leaders and army officers were landholders and had no disposition towards insurrection in the countryside. Indeed, it was no small task to arouse enthusiasm for agrarian reform and the arming of poor peasants even among the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party at that time. Within the course of a few weeks—and long before the Communists had made any progress in weaning the rank-and-file soldiery from their officers—the Left Kuomintang government at Wuhan turned against the Chinese Communists and sent Roy, Borodin, and the Russian military advisers packing back to Moscow.

For the return journey the Comintern assigned Roy three large touring cars driven by GPU men and fitted with auxiliary springs and extra petrol tins lashed to the running boards. The cavalcade proceeded north-west

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across the Mongolian deserts to Urga and thence to the Soviet Union.

Roy had failed abysmally—as had the entire Communist leadership from Stalin down—but he did not leave China without grasping a number of realities which changed the whole subsequent course of his life.

The threat to Communist-led revolutions in Asia, he had written soon after his arrival in Canton, did not reside in the gunboats and artillery of the imperialists and their warlord allies. The greatest challenge to Communism arose from the new American tendency—not unlike the new policies he had observed the British formulating for India—to undercut the revolution with good works. The United States, pursuing a policy of 'liberal imperialism', could re-channel the whole Chinese revolution—a feat that the old-style imperialist could never accomplish.

The usual imperialist tendency, he argued, was to suppress the nationalist revolutionary movement by force and to bolster up the old regime of reactionaries and militarists. Such a policy, however, would only accelerate the development of the revolution. On the other hand, if industrialisation could be accomplished in China and other colonial and semi-colonial countries by capital exported from the United States and other imperialist powers, it would 'mark a big step forward in the stabilisation of world capitalism'. Already there were indications that the United States might follow such a policy of peaceful penetration and so kill with kindness the violent revolution, otherwise inevitable, that would bring victory for Communism in China. So clear was his perception of this possibility that in later years Roy could not comprehend what he considered to be the blindness and obtuseness of American policies towards the Chinese revolution.

PARALLEL developments, Roy thought, were taking place in India. In September 1927, shortly after his arrival in Moscow from China, he prepared a draft resolution on the Indian question. 'Imperialism', he wrote, 'must proceed very cautiously in this new path which is as likely to lead it out of the post-war crisis as to destruction. The implication of the new policy is the gradual "de-colonisation" of India, which will be allowed eventually to evolve out of the state of "dependency" to "Dominion Status". The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of Imperialist finance. From a backward agricultural colonial possession, India will become a modern industrial country, a member of "the British Commonwealth of free nations". India is in a process of "de-colonisation" insofar as the policy, forced upon Imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism, abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods'.

These new and highly unorthodox concepts did not go unnoticed in Moscow. Stalin and his colleagues, indeed, needed a scapegoat for their China debacle, and now Roy's theory of decolonisation gave them one. There were opening attacks by Eugene Varga, and then, at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, in mid-1928, Otto Kuusinen closed in. He began by quoting Roy at the Second Congress against Roy upon his return from China.

'Foreign imperialism, which has been forced on the Eastern peoples', Roy had declared in 1920, 'has unquestionably impeded their social and economic development and has deprived them of the possibility of reaching the stage of development which has been reached in Europe and America. Owing to the imperialist policy which endeavours to retard industrial development in the colonies, the native proletariat has, in fact, begun only lately to exist'.

'But Comrade Roy holds different views now', Kuusinen asserted, and he quoted the paragraph of the draft resolution on India that dealt with dominion status. 'Thus Comrade Roy sees that the decolonisation policy of British imperialism would lead to the weakening and dissolution of the British Empire'.

In terms of the dialectics of history it was out of the question for the British Empire to dissolve except as the outcome of bitter struggle, and Kuusinen's charge was a serious one. Far more important, however, was the fact that Stalin had to place upon one scapegoat or

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another the responsibility for his humiliating failure in China. Where could he find a better candidate than this comrade who seemed to have denied the reactionary role of imperialism and the inevitability of struggle?

Expelled from the Comintern, Roy returned to India, where he spent six years in jail for his revolutionary activities. Deprived of ideological reading matter during his imprisonment, he turned to the physical and social sciences for clues to the patterns and motivations of political and social behaviour. In the years following his release he moved steadily from materialism to humanism and became a philosopher rather than a political leader.

For Roy the revolutionist this compulsion constantly to search for the truth and constantly to adjust his convictions thereto was a tragic weakness. For Roy the philosopher, on the other hand, it was his greatest strength.

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COMINTERN REMINISCENCES

Interview with an Ex-Insider

The man interviewed was from the early nineteen-twenties active in the communist movement in a number of countries. Later he worked in the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) in Moscow. In the middle thirties he, like so many other leading communists, fell victim to the wave of persecution then started by Stalin. He spent a great many years in Soviet prisons and labour camps, and was released a few years after Stalin's death. Again like so many others in a similar position, he was completely rehabilitated and his party standing restored. Later he left the country, and has withdrawn from all political activity, occupying his time in part by recalling his memories of earlier years.

W. I wanted to ask you, it's something in which we're particularly interested, about the Comintern. There's a fairly large body of literature about it, about the congresses, about the policy and ideology. But it seems to me that the personal element, that is, the personalities of the people at the top, played a part, and I think it would be interesting to hear something about them. Of course, it's all water over the mill by now; most of them are no longer among the living. But perhaps you could say something about the leading personalities of the thirties.

P. Of course you're right. The history of the labour movement, and particularly of the Comintern, is largely *terra incognita,* and there has been no investigation at all of how far the fate of this organisation, how far its policy, its resolutions and decisions, were affected by the character and gifts of the people who ran it. I remember that in the early thirties there was some discussion about getting out a history of the Comintern. I was a member of several commissions which were to bring it out (first in two volumes, then in four, and at one time they even considered twelve!). And the more preparations made, the more the number of people drawn into the work, the clearer it became that, because of what was happening at the time, the work done and the material collected for publication simply had to be locked away; it couldn't be published. Things were happening so fast, the changes were so drastic, that with every day the past had to be seen from a different angle.

W. How did you and your colleagues react to it?

P. We felt as though we were trying to photograph an express train, or a rocket, and we couldn't keep up with it. Whatever it was we were doing, it wasn't writing history, and when in 1934 Dimitrov was put at the head of the International it really was a decent gesture on his part to dissolve all the history commissions. Of course, since then the Comintern itself has been dissolved, and although 17 years have passed since then, nothing of any value about the history of the Comintern has been published in the Soviet Union. And nothing can be, neither about the measures nor about the men behind them, so long as the people in Moscow have to be as cautious, about the past, present, and future, as they still have to be.

W. Last year, on the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Comintern, a number of articles appeared.

P. Yes, nothing more than articles. The best was one by Togliatti, but even he only stuck his neck out a little way. He did speak of certain mistakes, chiefly in the twenties and early thirties, of certain difficulties in the International. But he made no attempt to survey critically the work of the Comintern as a whole.

W. Could you say something about the interaction between the men and the movement?

P. It's difficult to separate that question from another one, which I'd like to put first. How far, or rather for how long, was the Comintern really an international organisation, as had been intended by its founders, and particularly by Lenin, and how did it turn into a subsidiary organisation of the communist State, while the sections steadily lost influence.

W. I'm sure we shall come back to that. Thinking it over, it seems to me that the break in the

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Comintern history came in 1928, when Bukharin was removed from the leading position, and the organisation was taken over by Piatnitsky, Kuusinen, and Manuilsky. Did these three work together as a sort of triumvirate, or was one of them in a position of authority over the others? Did they disagree, on ideological or other questions?

P. I should say it's difficult to pin down the exact point marking the change from one period to another. That itself was a period rather than a point of time, and it asserted itself in 1926 when Zinoviev was dismissed as President of the Comintern. Up till then, that is from 1919 when the Comintern was founded, it was dominated first by Lenin and by the small group who had worked with him, particularly Zinoviev; that was the time when the internationalist features of the Comintern were most marked. Communists in other countries showed a great deal of independence and initiative. The constituent parties were by no means subject to mechanical, detailed central control. True, after the 21 conditions of admission were adopted in 1920, there was a common framework for all of them, but within that there were in practically every party a number of groups and trends, and there were genuine theoretical disputes, and they tried to work out a coherent ideology. After Lenin died (in 1924) the tendency formulated by Zinoviev in the slogan 'Bolshevize the Comintern' got the upper hand. The idea that the Comintern was a river into which a number of streams flowed was dropped; the parties now only discussed the detailed questions which affected them, while general analysis was left more and more to the Executive, which became more and more powerful, and the parties had only to apply in their countries the decisions made by the ECCI. After that the decisive position of the Russian Communist Party—which is what Bolshevization amounted to—was virtually unchallenged. There was only one standard, the standard set by the Bolsheviks. A movement was successful to the degree that it could approach that shining example, and the degree to which it could adapt itself to it.

W. Could you be more specific about that? How did this dominance make itself felt?

P. Roughly, in three ways. First of all, the Russian CP was the only one holding State power; it had gone over from theory to practice, and its success set the example to be followed. Secondly, they were the party which, even before seizing power, had tried to extend and amplify the theoretical foundations of communism. And finally, there was the great and growing material dependence of the entire communist movement on Moscow. I'm using the word material in a broad sense, to cover finance, organisation, and communist literature.

W. Would you say that this was enough, without terror or compulsion, to ensure that the Comintern was used as an instrument of Soviet policy?

P. Yes, even if the Comintern was not a mere instrument of the Soviet government, those three factors operated in such a way that gradually nothing was left in the Comintern that could not be used for the purposes of Soviet policy, and communists everywhere were proud of this. The whole period, the Zinoviev period up to 1926 and the Bukharin period up to 1928, was one of constant splits. What remained when the next period opened was only a small part of the mass movement over which the Comintern had influence in the early twenties, a fairly restricted inner core who were prepared to follow the new line unreservedly.

W. Let's go back to personalities, those who, when Bukharin went, were responsible for Comintern activities. We know in rough outline the curriculum vitae of Kuusinen, Piatnitsky, and Manuilsky. What we don't know is what they were like as men, as political leaders, what they stood for in the Comintern.

P. I couldn't answer this question fully unless I dealt with their work, and the work of the Comintern, as a whole. But I can give you a few particulars. I knew them well, because I was working in the Executive *apparat* precisely at that time. When Zinoviev was removed as President, the post itself was abolished. When the members from other countries turned up in Moscow for the Executive meeting their first question was: 'Who's taking Zinoviev's place?' They were told that in future the Comintern would be run differently. The idea of a one-man dictatorship, or of one man in the most influential position, was not in accordance with communist principles. 'We can't have one man

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on top. We must have a collective.' That was the official explanation. But behind the scenes it was whispered—as early as 1926—that there was only one person capable of filling such a position, and that was Stalin. Of course, in the background, Stalin would take charge of the Comintern. It was taken for granted, and the Soviet delegation to the ECCI made it explicit, that Stalin was deeply interested in these questions and the decision rested with him, but the practical conduct of affairs was to be in the hands of a collegium.

W. Who else was there in the collegium besides the three we've already mentioned?

P. While Bukharin was there, he was the leading one among them. Then, in the late twenties, there were Knorin and Gusev. In that transitional period, especially after Bukharin was removed in 1928, these five so to speak divided the world between them. There were regional secretariats at the ECCI, and each of these five had one under his charge. Knorin had Germany and central Europe, Gusev had the Anglo-Saxon countries. The Latin countries—France, Italy, Spain, etc. came under Manuilsky, and Kuusinen had the East. Of course, the arrangements changed from time to time. On paper, it was the Executive which took decisions, but really it was the regional secretariats which drafted the decisions, and these individuals confirmed them. Their power was limited in two directions. For all those years, and probably to the end of the Comintern, no important question of principle was settled, no decisions taken on any question of more than local significance, without the Russian delegation. This consisted of the CPSU members of the Executive, and they acted with the authority of Stalin. From 1926 on Stalin was the ruler of the Communist International and there were no restrictions on his power, although at different times he acted largely through different people, up to 1931, for example, through Molotov.

W. Did it always work smoothly?

P. Of course, decisions had formally to be taken by the Executive. But, for example, on the German question, in the critical year 1932, when there was the so-called 'Neumann rebellion' on the question whether to form a united front, whether the KPD should set its course for the capture of power—the decision on these vital questions was left to Stalin alone. There were times when a decision had been taken and been ratified by all the competent bodies and would be ready for execution when it was reversed by Stalin. He'd been too busy to give his opinion earlier. And right away, it was staggering, the resolutions were amended, instructions rewritten, minutes corrected. Even in the early thirties everyone was aware that every decision carried the one reservation—it had to have Stalin's approval; and conversely everything that Stalin wanted done would be presented as a proposal from the Russian delegation and would immediately become law, even if it had never been discussed, and even if differing and opposed opinions had been expressed earlier.

W. I still want to come back to those five personalities. Can you tell us something about the less well known of them, Knorin and Gusev?

P. They came to the fore when the idea was to undermine Zinoviev's influence, and more particularly after the fourteenth Russian party congress, when Zinoviev came out openly against Stalin. Stalin knew very well that once Zinoviev was defeated in the Russian party, he had no chance of retaining his position in the Comintern or using it for his purposes. Even Trotsky, who had far more faith in the International and hoped to be able to use it in his cause, only appealed to it too late, when his cause was already lost. And Zinoviev had no chance, in spite of his previous attachment to Lenin and his personal popularity, because everybody knew that although the International consisted of 50 or 60 parties, and dozens of representatives from different countries sat on the Executive, there was no possibility whatever of leading them against the Russian party.

W. Stalin himself knew that too.

P. Of course. That wasn't what worried him. He wanted to avoid a showdown between the Comintern, the Comintern *apparat*, and the Russian party. He knew it would not come to that, but he was looking ahead and realised that getting rid of Zinoviev wasn't enough; he would also have to get rid of those in the *apparat* who were closely associated with Zinoviev, and he wanted to have his own reliable supporters inside. These new people began to pop up in the Comintern from about 1925. Following the Bolshevik tradition as well as

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his own inclinations, Stalin's first aim was to take over the organisational apparatus, and the new people were placed in the org-department and the communications department. The people in the regional secretariats were more difficult to replace. They had to know *something* about the area they were dealing with, and have some contact with the parties there. You couldn't just pick on any Ivan Ivanovich out of the Russian party machine and give him an interpreter and teach him the economy and geography of the country and even send him there. I count the *apparatchiki* who really became experts in this way on the fingers of one hand. In practically every department there was only one, at the most two, who really knew their subject.

W. Did they all come out of the Russian party machine?

P. No, many of them were russified emigrés, a good many of them Hungarians, emigrés since 1919-20, like Bela Kun. Bela Kun had the Balkans as well as the Austrian succession States under his charge. Then there was the old bolshevik Smolianski, and the menshevik-turned-bolshevik Martynov, who had some international experience and so could be used for this purpose. It was most difficult to find competent people for the East, and for this job they picked another Hungarian, Magyar, who after a short stay in China qualified as a Chinese expert. In the Eastern Department there were also a few Russians, particularly Safarov, who had won a considerable reputation in Lenin's time as an expert on Eastern affairs and would certainly have been the chief man in this field if he had not been active in the Leningrad opposition in 1925.

W. How did this work out? How was control maintained?

P. After a while Stalin and the Russian delegation realised that it wouldn't work just to appoint new experts everywhere, and they only insisted on putting new, 'reliable' people into the key positions, and letting those who had worked under Zinoviev and were not compromised go on working. At the head of the org-department, and so of the entire Comintern machine, there was Osip Piatnitsky, taken over from the Zinoviev apparatus. He did not carry much weight on political questions, and would go for advice to other members of the Executive, or to the regional specialists. But he always took charge of the final formulation, because he decided how a thing was to be carried through organisationally and financed.

W. And Knorin and Gusev?

P. Knorin wasn't really a Russian, but a Lett, and the Letts had always been in the radical wing of the old Russian Social-Democratic party, and nearly always supported Lenin. Knorin joined the bolsheviks in 1910 or 1912; he really belonged to the Molotov-Kaganovich generation of the Stalin machine.

W. Was he an able man?

P. What his qualifications were for work in the international field remained to the end a puzzle even to his closest associates. It's true he was an honest man, devoted and ready for any sacrifice. He knew a little German, like most Balts, and he knew something of the history of the world labour movement. But he was the typical dogmatist, which made him difficult to work with. He had mastered a number of formulas, and the movement, the life of the parties, political events, were merely areas in which these formulas could be applied. If one formula didn't work, or worked disastrously, he would abandon it and try another. We used to say he was like an incompetent cook who, having spoiled a dish by using the wrong recipe, tries to improve it by using another, forgetting that there wasn't enough food from the start to make the dish. We also said of him that he ruined one party after the other in order to try out all his formulas, but he couldn't succeed because there weren't enough parties to go round. Incidentally, Knorin was also an editor of *Pravda*, and gave most of his time to that, so that when it came to the vital question of the German party the decisions were taken not by him but by his experts.

W. And who were they?

P. There was first of all Smolianski, who really did know something and was a thoughtful man and tried to get outside the formulas by which he too was bound. Then there was the ex-menshevik Martynov, who later edited *The Communist International*, and then there were the German representatives, Fritz Heckert, Wilhelm Pieck, Heinz Neumann, Remmele, and now and again Thaelmann turned up. At that

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time Ulbricht had a very subordinate post in the Berlin organisation, and was not consulted on political questions. But Knorin was still the decisive voice for German and central European questions, and the information on Germany which went to the Russian delegation and on which Stalin himself was dependent mostly went through Knorin's hands. What happened was often determined more by these practical organisational arrangements than by the general policy as such. I met several prominent German communists, both before and after Hitler's accession to power, who placed on Knorin a good part of the responsibility for the mistakes that were made.

W. Did they give any particular examples?

P. Well, there was one in particular, the united front, which was the key question in 1932-33. It is very widely believed that a united front in 1932 might have blocked Hitler's path. And there's fairly general agreement as to who blocked the path to the united front. It was some of the leaders of the communist party rather than the social democrats. Knorin was thought to be one of these who at the last moment, to the moment when it was already too late, thwarted the united front. Whether that was really his own opinion, or whether it was imposed on him from above, we don't know, but those working in the Comintern apparatus attributed the opinion to him. He was a typical Lett, silent and closed in on himself, with few friends outside his own countrymen. It was thought that he spoke so little because he had much to say, that he was economical with words because they were so valuable, that deep thought lay behind. But ordinary mortals who read one of his speeches or articles, and then read it through a second or third time, came to the conclusion that there was nothing behind after all.

W. What happened to Knorin? Was he involved in one of the trials?

P. Only indirectly. He was removed in 1936, suspected of nationalist deviation. He was arrested by the NKVD in 1937, horribly tortured to force him to confess that he'd been a Tsarist agent and later bought by the Gestapo, which was of course absolute nonsense, and he was shot in 1937 or 1938.

W. And now let's turn to Gusev.

P. Gusev also started work in the Comintern *apparat* in the twenties, having worked before in the Russian central committee. (Gusev was his party name; his real name was Drabkin.) He had joined the bolsheviks in 1903 or 1905, and had been a revolutionary from his student days. He had carried out a number of important missions for the central committee in Tsarist times, but his only qualification for working in the International was that before the revolution he had lived for a time as an emigré in America and had some knowledge of English and of the American labour movement. I think he worked for a time with the IWW, and so he was put in charge of the Anglo-American secretariat. He had the best intentions, and I and most workers in the Comintern felt that he really tried to be flexible, to listen to others, to make the necessary adaptations to the circumstances of the different parties. But good intentions weren't enough.

W. How did they explain the fact that Communism had made so little progress in the Anglo-Saxon countries?

P. Gusev said to me once in conversation, he felt that he was working in empty space. The resolutions on the English and American parties passed year after year (and which he assured me, and I know he honestly believed it, and been worked out very carefully and were in the interests of the English and American workers) remained an empty shell. It was odd that Gusev seemed quite unable to understand this. Although Lenin's theory of the use of super-profits from imperialism to corrupt a section of the workers and so create a labour aristocracy that supported the bourgeoisie should have been sufficient at least for him, he could not explain how such a corrupt labour aristocracy managed to call a general strike in Britain. Somehow or other he had to reconcile the contradiction, and reached the fallacious conclusion that the key to the contradiction could be found in the adherence of the parties in these countries to democratic traditions; they adapted themselves to Anglo-Saxon democracy because they had not learned to follow the example of the bolsheviks. To describe the stupefaction of the English and American representatives when they were told to take as their model a strike in Ivanovo-Voznesensk in 1912

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is beyond my powers. Even so, that wasn't the worst. After all, there was a textile industry in Ivanovo-Voznesensk; but sometimes this example wouldn't do, and they were given as an example let's say an outbreak in Ekaterinburg in 1898, which might conceivably have been relevant to English conditions two hundred years earlier, and it was only respect for Gusev, who was a devoted and honest man, that kept the discussion going. In any case his instructions, unlike Knorin's, could do little harm, for neither the English nor the American party was taken seriously. Gusev, by the way, was content enough that no crises developed in the English party; it showed a high degree of stability; it had kept its old leaders, and like an embalmed body was not exposed to disintegration; it had no breath and no movement.

W. Was the attitude to the American party the same? The crisis that broke out in 1929 must have suggested that there were possibilities there that could be exploited.

P. Yes, the situation was more complex there, and there were endless disputes in the American CP which led to explosions of one kind or another. It was pitiful to see how Gusev tried to smooth things over, but one split followed another.

W. What happened to Gusev, and who succeeded him? And who succeeded Knorin?

P. Everything was changed after Dimitrov became general secretary, after the seventh congress in 1935. But by that time I had no contact with Comintern work, although I know that Dimitrov tried to get people from the countries themselves to take over and strengthen the regional secretariats. By that time, of course, with Hitler in power, the German and central European secretariat had different functions; emphasis shifted to illegal work, work in the underground. And in Moscow itself a period of underground work began; the NKVD was constantly raiding the Headquarters of the world communist movement; there were mass arrests and mass banishments; the Comintern staff was decimated. Gusev stayed at his job nearly till his death in 1936 or 1937. He was an old man, and was buried with all honours in the Red Square. Although that wasn't the end of him. After his death his name was dragged into a number of conspiracy charges. Being dead, he couldn't be tried, but his name disappeared from party history and the urn containing his ashes was removed from the wall in the Red Square. But a short while ago, after Stalin died, he was rehabilitated, and his name has returned to the history books.

W. Perhaps the pivotal personality of those years was Manuilsky? After all, he was one of the few to survive the purges and the trials; he died only recently. Did you know Manuilsky well?

P. By talent and temperament he was a prominent figure in the Comintern, the most prominent in the second rank—that is, setting aside people like Lenin and Trotsky and Zinoviev and Dimitrov. I met him in 1925, and was immediately impressed by the rapidity with which he grasped questions, by his talents as a speaker, and also he had much wider knowledge than the others. He had spent a good deal of time abroad and, unlike many others who had spent years abroad and knew nothing about the countries in which they had lived, not even the language, let alone the literature, Manuilsky really knew his way around, and knew what the differences were and knew that it wasn't enough to apply formula X or Y. Oddly enough, his only foreign language was French, which he knew very well. He made no effort to learn German or English. But his habit of thought was less dogmatic and less schematic than his colleagues', and in addition he had the courage to have thoughts, to express them, to discuss differences and really argue about them. You know, that was something really exceptional in the Comintern apparatus in the years after Lenin. Perhaps it was because he wasn't a born bolshevik. For a long time he'd been in different social-democratic fractions, and even an anarchist, and so he felt uneasy in doctrinal fetters. When he returned to Russia in 1917 he joined the Mezhraiontsy, who wavered between the bolsheviks and the mensheviks, but on the whole they were closer to the bolsheviks. He attended the sixth bolshevik congress in 1917 under the name of Bezrabotny and spoke fervently against the idea of armed insurrection and the seizure of power. When the minutes of that congress were published in 1932 they said in the Comintern that Manuilsky had spent every penny he possessed buying up as many copies as he could.

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But it's an index to his capacity that he managed to adapt himself to the new conditions, and was considered very useful. He was a gifted improviser, and Stalin liked him, insofar as he liked anyone. They had met during the Civil War in the Ukraine, and Stalin always tried to get his support. Manuilsky was on Stalin's side from the first moment of the fight with Trotsky, and his services were at Stalin's disposal when the break with Zinoviev followed. To be fair, his attitude to Zinoviev was rather ironical even when Zinoviev was at the height of his power in the Comintern.

W. Would you say he was purely opportunist?

P. No, I think it likely that he really agreed with Stalin rather than with the opposition.

W. How did the division of labour work out? Were the boundaries clear, and were they always kept?

P. You may think it odd, but the division of function was fairly strict. And there was a reason as well as an excuse for this. And the reason was the conspiratorial work that was done. If it had been an ordinary organisation, say like a Ministry, one department could have meddled in another department's affairs. But from its very foundation, and increasingly with the years, the Comintern had engaged in all kinds of illegal work. There were fewer legal than illegal parties, and even the legal ones were compelled to do a good deal of their work illegally. And this conspiratorial, secret side of the work meant that the people engaged in it had to know only so much as they needed to know, and no more. The idea that the national parties were merely sections of an international whole became more and more illusory. Recently I read something of Silone's—he was a member of the ECCI at one time—in which he said that one of the reasons why he had broken with the Comintern was that he had been asked to sign a resolution condemning Trotsky without even having read it. From my experience I would say that in 99 cases out of a hundred individuals refrained from spoiling the appearance of unanimity even if they didn't agree because the whole business was meaningless. They said to themselves: 'Supposing I did vote against? Supposing I really knew all the details? Would my vote make any difference?' The vote affected only the fate of the voter. A vote against the resolution condemning Trotsky would not have saved Trotsky, would not have affected the fate of the Russian party, but only the fate of the man casting the vote.

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OSKAR LANGE'S NEW ECONOMICS

Alfred Zauberman

FOR the last few years Oskar Lange has been campaigning for a rejuvenation and modernisation of Marxist economic thought. He has tried to reopen its west windows, tightly shut for decades, and to let some fresh air into the stuffy atmosphere. Several essays by Lange on the subject have caused a considerable stir both within and outside the communist world. And he has now applied himself to piecing together his ideas into a systematic whole. The project has crystallised so far in the first volume of what is intended eventually to be a grand trilogy.[1] The second and third volumes are to tackle particular questions of economics, among them the theory of growth, the 'laws' of motion, and a comparative analysis of socio-economic formations. The volume which appeared last year is an enquiry into still more general problems of political economy. It thus inevitably works at very high altitudes of abstraction, verging on political philosophy. Yet some of its parts, indeed as we shall presently see, its core, have immediately practical implications for the Soviet type economy. It is no exaggeration to say that this book, in which the argument has the usual Langovian elegance, is a first-class event from both the intellectual and the practical angles.

Central to Lange's system are his considerations on the principle of rationality in economic activities, on the economy of means in pursuing ends. The principle as applicable to a centrally planned and controlled economy of the Soviet type has been hotly debated in the West, where there is a sizeable literature on the subject (especially in the context of a meaningful measurement of the economic growth of the Soviet orbit). There is none in the East. The well-known Polish economist, Brus, believes there has been a tacit assumption that the principle of economic rationality and economics defined as a science of the social laws of production exclude each other completely and unconditionally. There is probably something more to it. Perhaps the silence can be accounted for at least in part by the risks of touching on ideologically treacherous matters, the risk of undermining some taboos and sacred myths. Whatever the reasons, the silence has been broken by Lange. The outline of the issue as he sees it would be broadly this: The rule of the principle of rationality is a product of historical development. It had its first triumphs in capitalist enterprise, but within the capitalist frame it has had to suffer from both distortions and limitations. The distortions stem from the antagonistic fashion in which it acts: maximising the capitalist's profits, that is, minimising his costs, implies minimising the workers' rewards. The basic limitation comes from the very nature of the atomistic system in which the principle of rationality operates: its essence is the maximisation of *private* gain. Only the socialist sytem provides full scope for rationality. Socialism does so because 'the superstructure of the socialist formation does not need all the many irrational elements based on the antagonistic relations of production'. (Is Lange seriously trying to suggest in this obscure phrase that under socialism profits and wages cease to be antagonistic in his sense?) Secondly, socialism does so because only in a socialist system can rationality be 'integrated' in a plan, initially on a national scale and at a later stage, on a supra-national as well. 'The integration of the targets of socialist enterprises into a common aim, determined by the national economic plan, leads to a hierarchic structure of aims. . . . The hierarchical structure of goals is a property of the socialist mode of production in the same way as that of the capitalist mode is the existence of mutually independent but parallel aims for individual enterprises: the maximisation of profit . . . It is at the same time an expression of the socio-economic rationality of the socialist mode of production' (p. 159). And 'the extent of this

[1] Oskar Lange, *Ekonomia Polityczna—Zagadnienia Ogólne* (Warsaw, 1959).

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integration may vary . . . In countries in which the socialist mode of production prevails or is developing, it corresponds with that of the State organisation of the society; that is, it embraces the national economy. Undoubtedly the planning of socialist economy will, at a further stage of development of the socialist system of production, acquire an international character; this has already begun' (p. 158). A footnote to this sentence refers the reader to the activities of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid.

Thus, for Lange, it is the planner's intervention that secures to the economy a rationality of a superior—a 'social'—kind. But he concedes that the process by which a socialist economy becomes rational is only gradual and 'arduous', and is linked to improving and perfecting the tools it wields—a subject which in Lange's reasoning holds a key place.

LANGE'S point of departure is that the principle of rationality is not peculiar to economic life alone: there are many other fields in which man is concerned about maximum effect with minimum effort. Surely this is primarily a question for the technologist; the army commander aims at victory with the least expenditure of resources; the scholar is concerned about the 'efficiency' of scientific procedures. To all of them the essence of the rationality problem—of the efficiency dilemma—is the same, and consequently it is proper to look for its common elements. This leads Lange to a general theory of purposeful human activity. It is his reiterated contention that the enquiry into its logic (what he calls praxeology) lies outside economics, as do the disciplines of its other handmaids, general logic, mathematics, statistics, economic geography, and history. This applies to the technical armoury of economic enquiry, including its modern powerful techniques of programming.

The programming techniques embrace the traditional marginal calculus as well as linear programming. The business of both is to find the best way of correlating ends and means, that is, to find the optimum among the various alternatives which may secure achievement of the goal. (In technical parlance this involves finding the maximum of the function of ends and the minimum of that of means). As Dorfman-Samuelson-Solow have put it: 'Like Molière's M. Jourdain and his prose, economists have been doing linear economics for more than forty years without being conscious of it.'[2] But it is only in more recent days that it has been developed into a fully fledged technique: Dantzig's elaboration of it, in the late 'forties. for his planning of activities of the American Air Force, marks its true birthday. Assisted by the enormous progress in mechanised computational techniques, it has made a truly spectacular career in the West. Now it is on the march for the conquest of the East, a move in which Oskar Lange has been instrumental. (I suggested some time ago that it was he who introduced the methodology to the Russians, and am encouraged by Professor Leontief's support for this view.)[3]

It is only natural that in his new work Lange should try to place the technique in a broader theoretical context and to relate it, as he does, to the very notion of rationality under socialism. Between the lines of his book one can read his conviction that Soviet-type planning is obsolete and inadequate and stands badly in need of borrowing from the West modern instruments for choice-making and for testing the consistency of choices. Indeed, what Lange clearly wants to make the principal message of his work is that these instruments can and should be used for 'deepening the socio-economic rationality of the social process of production and distribution'; that 'praxeology and its branches, such as operational analysis and the theory of programming, have great importance for the planning of a socialist national economy'. Goethe, let us recall, believed that double accounting methods were among the greatest inventions in the history of mankind. Lange says that perhaps 'after double bookkeeping and balance sheet accounting, after the method of national economic balances, the

[2] Robert Dorfman, Paul A. Samuelson, Robert M. Solow, *Linear Programming and Economic Analysis*, New York—London, 1958, p. 1.

[3] Cf. Alfred Zauberman, in *Soviet Studies*, vol. X, p. 390, and Wassily Leontief, *The Decay and Rise of Soviet Economic Science*, in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1960.

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techniques of programming will mark the third great historical phase in the development of the methodological means of rational economic activities'.[4]

Lange is not alone in his high estimate of the role of the new method for central planning. An authority of no lesser calibre than the originator of the input-output analysis, Leontief himself, on his return from a visit to the Soviet Union, expressed his view, in the article already referred to, that 'there can be little doubt that in years to come the introduction of scientific planning techniques will increase the overall productivity of the Soviet economy'. An observer cannot fail to sense a new spirit of adventure now abroad in the stagnating world of Soviet economics: quite a few Soviet economists believe that the assimilation of new ideas will open new horizons to Soviet planners.

TO be sure, these views and expectations can be, and indeed are, a subject of controversy. There are sceptics in the West as well as in the East, though the basis of their scepticism may be diametrically different. There are, in fact, indications of snags and difficulties which Soviet economists have come up against in experimenting with new methods. These are partly of a technical and partly of a theoretical nature, and among the latter, ideological impediments are of some relevance.

Professor Lange is no doubt alive to the power of pride and prejudice—Soviet pride and Marxist prejudice—in creating obstacles to the reception of contemporary Western implements of programming, which he favours and advocates. The marginalist approach is still proscribed in Soviet economic thinking, as shown by some recent violent outbreaks of ideological witch-hunting: the hue and cry against a new work by the distinguished mathematical economist, Professor Kantorovich, whose position on many points is close to Lange's, is particularly noteworthy. (Kantorovich's work is significant for its amazingly frank criticism of Soviet planning methods, its strong support for the adoption of rational prices for factors of production—land, capital, and labour—and for products, however much this may conflict with the Marxist theoretical framework, and for its advocacy of modern programming techniques. Incidentally, Professor Kantorovich claims to have evolved these techniques in his pre-war work, a claim which may soften the awkward prestige problem of adopting Western methodologies.) And there are quite a few diehards who look askance at the theoretical implications of linear programming, whatever its practical merits and demerits.

Incidentally, Lange's awareness of hurdles of this sort may account for his anxiety to have the problems of rationality and its implements removed from the domain of economics proper. It is true that, as often happens in life, Lange has fallen in more than one respect under the spell of his great adversary Ludwig von Mises, his opponent in the famous discussion of the thirties, who was the first to see that the logic of economic activities should be transferred to the wider context of praxeology.[5] It is also true that this discipline received its first systematic treatment in a Polish school of philosophical thought.[6] But, such influences apart, it would not be surprising if Professor Lange were to try to immunise his conceptual framework ideologically by showing it to be part of general common-sense logic, rather than economics—a field where the sensitivity of Marxist orthodoxy has been traditionally at its acutest.

It remains to be seen how Professor Lange will manage in any head-on encounter with those elements in the Marxist doctrinal heritage which have paralysed Soviet economics and handicapped the Soviet economy. The discussion of value and price he has postponed to the second volume. (Lange's critique of the labour theory of value as a help in interpreting real life goes back to the thirties; exactly a quarter of a century ago he said that this theory '. . . has no qualities which would make it, from the Marxist point of view, superior to the modern elaborate theory of economic equilibrium. It is only a more primitive form of the latter restricted to the narrow field of pure competition,

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

[5] Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action—A Treatise in Economics* (London, 1949).

[6] Especially in the works of T. Kotarbinski, whose influence on Lange seems to be particularly strong.

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and not without its limitations even in this field'.)[7] But he must have thought it inopportune today not to dissociate himself from certain trends in post-Marxist thinking. For while Professor Lange seems to have obtained a safe-conduct for his explorations of Western intellectual areas in quest of prefabricated aids to economic efficiency, he has nevertheless attracted the censorious eye of ideological watchdogs because of certain suspect affinities. He was the target of an attack by one of them, Professor Rumyantsev, at a conference held at Moscow University at the end of 1958 to consider 'anti-Marxian theories'.[8]

The charge against Lange was in essence one of 'subjectivism', and some echoes of the attack can be detected in his criticism of 'subjectivist' schools in Western economics, namely, that in their approach the *social* character of economic processes has been lost; that in Lange's words they have 'liquidated *political* economy' (my italics, A.Z.).[9] His further charge is that, either as a marginal utility theory or theory of choices along a fixed scale of preferences, they have gratuitously extended the principle of maximisation from the capitalist enterprise to every field of economic activity and every social and historical environment. Here we are back again at the problem of rationality and efficiency. The point is that one can validly postulate the efficiency of a competitive equilibrium with a sum total of market demand stemming from a given pattern on consumers' behaviour without committing oneself to any specific view as to the psychology of the behaviour; but Lange fails to analyse adequately his analogue, i.e., the case where the scale of preferences is set up in the planning offices of a 'Directorate of Social Rationality'. You may equip these offices, as Lange tries to do, with refined instruments of maximisation, but you still have to provide an answer to the question, what is it you ultimately propose to maximise? Lange evades the need to make more explicit his assumption of a Benevolent Despot.

It is only fair to add that Lange has been reproached by some Marxists with other evasions. In a special discussion organised at the School of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Party, Professor Wyrozemski remarked: 'In . . . this critique of bourgeois political economy you can sense . . . a sort of evasiveness about the neo-classical political economy from which the most modern political economies stem. True, Lange notes that it belongs to the psychological school but, in the context, one cannot help feeling that this criticism does not apply fully to the Marshallian neo-classical economy. A bolder critique . . . would better serve the purpose' (*Nowe Drogi*, No. 3, 1960, p. 133). On the same occasion, a more orthodox Marxist, Professor Bronislaw Minc, deplored Lange's reticence with regard to neo-marginalism (*ibid.*, p. 126).

WITH all this, Lange's excursions into post-war Marxian, non-Marxist economic thought is head and shoulders above what usually comes from Soviet pens. It is more erudite, more sophisticated, and more urbane. It differs by its very assumption of a necessary variety of views in economic thought, a necessity which he deduces from the 'dialectical nature of the process of cognition in which human thought is shaped in the mutual interaction of man and his environment'.[10] (This is incidentally one of Lange's few references to dialectics—small wonder that he has been taken to task by the leading orthodox Polish philosopher for omitting what is specifically Marxist from his exposition of methodology.)[11]

Lange's volume ends with a significant chapter on the social role and conditioning of economic thought. This is an elaboration of his thesis evolved in essays which I discussed some time ago in the pages of this journal.[12] Lange's key idea, in radical contrast to the established Soviet tenet, is that for the last three-quarters of a century or so there has been

[7] O. Lange, 'Marxian Economics and Modern Economic Thought', in *Review of Economic Studies*, June 1935, p. 195.

[8] Reported in *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, 1959, 3, p. 146.

[9] *Ekonomia Polityczna*, p. 230.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[11] Adam Schaff in *Przeglad Kulturalny*, 1960, 3.

[12] *Soviet Survey*, October-December 1958.

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a continuous return to integrity in bourgeois economics; that it has ceased to be 'vulgar' and apologetic; that this is particularly true of the theory of imperfect competition, of welfare economics, of econometrics. However, Lange's parallel contention, that over the last forty years Soviet economics has been decaying and turning into apologetics, is strikingly toned down. Still more striking is it to find in his book a reassessment of Stalin's role as a theoretician: Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, Lange notes, is still the most important work on the subject which has appeared in the Soviet Union, and in spite of serious criticism it 'has exercised a great influence on the development of thought in this field'. (However, on some pages of the book Stalin meets as a quotable authority at least one of his victims, Bukharin).[13] The homage paid by Lange to Stalin has been warmly applauded by the orthodox, which may be, to use Lange's terms, a case of the 'social conditioning' of the economist. Taken all in all, the tone of Lange's work recalls that of the humanist writing in the reign of the schoolmen; it has the same ingredients, make-believe, prudence and courage. He had the right to conclude his book, as he did, with Dante's words:

Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto;
Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta.

[13] Some references to Bukharin are critical: but he is quoted at least once approvingly, p. 259, in a reference to his analysis of 'subjectivist' schools as 'the rentier's political economy'.

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